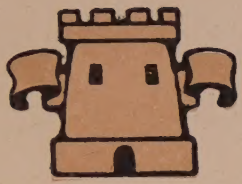

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FRONTISPIECES AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

JUAN VALERA

PEPITA JIMÉNEZ

TRANSLATED FROM
THE SPANISH

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY ON
SPANISH FICTION BY PROF.
MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN

A FRONTISPIECE AND A
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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Pepita Jimenez

PEPITA JIMÉNEZ

CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION 5

LIFE OF VALERA 17

AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE FIRST AMERICAN EDITION 21

DISCOVERY OF THE MANUSCRIPT 35

PART I

LETTERS FROM MY NEPHEW 38

PART II

PARALIPOMENA 166

PART III

LETTERS OF MY BROTHER 302

INTRODUCTION

THE three modern Spanish novels, "Pepita Jiménez," by Juan Valera; "The Fourth Estate," by Armando Palacio Valdés; and "Doña Perfecta," by Benito Pérez Galdós, are typical of the life of Spain, seen from various points of view—but all Spanish points of view—of to-day. They are not only artistic books of fiction, but sociological and psychological documents of the greatest value. Of the three, "Pepita Jiménez" is the most charming and characteristic; and it, of the three, is least touched by the French influence of the naturalistic school. Yet, if one compares the masterpiece of Fernan Caballero, which is "The Sea Gull," with a novel like "The Swan of Villamorta," by her successor, Madame Pardo Bazán, one finds that there is something in the genius of Spanish literature itself not unrelated to the less "scientific" and less repellent form of naturalism. Both in "Pepita Jiménez" and "The Fourth Estate" there is that "complete synthesis of gravity of matter and gaiety of manner," which, as Coven-

try Patmore says, "is the glittering crown of art, and which out of Spanish literature is to be found only in Shakespeare, and even in him in a far less obvious degree." Valera's masterpiece is a masterpiece of exquisite, cheerful, sensuous, but not sensual, art. It is difficult to find words to express its high value, and no words can express the nameless charm of personality which permeates its style and which is not lost in our colder English.

Of these three typical novelists, the author of "Pepita Jiménez" is the most joyously in love with life. In "Doña Perfecta," Galdós, as in all his best-known works, is almost dangerously in love with his thesis—less so, perhaps, in "Doña Perfecta" than in his more ponderous novel "Gloria," and the gaiety of the manner of Valdés sometimes leaves the English-speaking reader in doubt as to whether he takes life seriously. The realism of Galdós is more philosophical than that of Valdés, more abstract, and not impartial at all. In fact, the "tendency" with Galdós sometimes almost obliterates the "novel" quality, and we hear the preacher through the thin veil of fiction. On the other hand, the opponent to his doctrine, though his colleague in manner, Padre Coloma, is even

more gloomy in his realism than Galdós. The hopelessness of "Currita," Coloma's masterpiece, is even deeper than that of "Doña Perfecta," where one feels the coming of the storm from the very beginning. Neither Coloma, the defender of the faith as held by the orthodox Spaniard, nor Galdós, the iconoclast, looks on Spain with cheerful eyes. If in "Currita" the society of Madrid is depicted as holding only male and female rakes, in "Doña Perfecta" the society of the provinces is composed of bigots without hearts and even without common sense.

"The Fourth Estate" is the best example of Spanish realism extant. Valdés knows the sea—witness "The Joy of Captain Ribot"—and the land by the sea as well. The town of Sarrio we can not see with our eyes, we can not know the color of its walls, nor touch the furniture of its clubs, but we know it in reality as well as we know Anthony Trollope's "Barchester," George Eliot's "Middlemarch," Mrs. Gaskell's "Cranford," Mrs. Oliphant's "Carlingford," or Mrs. Deland's "Old Chester"—as well as we know Father Goriot's boarding-house, or the interior of Mr. Squeers's school. Valdés owes much to Balzac, but here,

too, when we speak of "influences," we must allow greatly for a certain Spanish quality, frequent in Calderon and Cervantes, which is not the realism of Balzac, but different from it because it is not self-conscious. Now, Galdós is often self-conscious, and Madame Pardo Bazán always is so; Valdés makes his picture with a light and cheerful touch, inexorably true, but with no constant assertion that he paints for the sake of truth.

The tragedy of "The Fourth Estate" is as inexorable as that of "Doña Perfecta," but it is not the main thing. All the life in the book is not subservient to this tragedy. There is, as in life, much comedy and many sidelights from the sun. And the ending of Gonzalo, his refusal to live after the loss of a woman he loved, whom he ought to have hated, is brought about by the processes of his soul, and not by any vulgar use of machinery. The end is, as Robert Louis Stevenson once said in regard to a story of his own, "inevitable"—it could not have been otherwise. And, after all, this is the only excuse for a tragedy in a novel—even in a novel of Continental realism, which differs as much from our realism as gray from complete black. The plain speaking of Valdés has no pru-

riency in it. It is the plain speaking of Calderon, not the self-conscious analysis of Bourget or the deliberate pruriency of Zola, in which the roots of life, which are in the mud, are exposed at the expense of the splendid blooms that open to heaven. Valdés, in "The Fourth Estate," is less religious than Valera, in "Pepita Jiménez"; but one feels that he is writing of a people who, as René Bazin says of the English, "still penetrated with Christianity, conserve, from their traditions, a divine ideal mingled with all human appetites." Let us take, for instance, the central figure in "The Fourth Estate," Cecilia. She is purity itself, though she loves Gonzalo with all her heart, even after his marriage with her sister. Christianity, working in one of the highest types of womanhood, could alone have produced such a creature. Don Rosendo and his wife, Doña Paula, are most carefully done—touch by touch their characters are painted until they stand before us, as if we saw them.

Doña Paula's progress from the costume of the cigarette-maker to the gloves and hat of the great lady, and its effect on the conservative minds of Sarrio, is shown to us rather than told. "Whenever Doña Paula appeared in public with the

abhorred hat upon her head, or with any other departure from her old attire, she was always greeted with a murmur of disapproval. The fault of the matter lay in her never having resented, in public or in private, or even in the sanctum of her own feelings, this malignant treatment of her fellow townsfolk. She considered it natural and reasonable, and it never occurred to her that it ought not to have been; her ideas of conventionality had never prompted her to rebel against the tyranny of public opinion. She believed in all good faith that in adopting the gloves, the mantilla, or the hat, she had committed a breach of laws both human and divine, and that the murmurs and mocking glances were the just retribution for the infraction."

Doña Paula, married to a man much above her in rank, ardently desiring the prerogatives of her new class, and foolishly wretched when she acquires them, develops, as the story goes on, until we forget her frivolities and follies and learn to respect her. Don Rosendo, the rich, sentimental, and vain philanthropist, is a man who could only have existed in a Latin country, and in a town like Sarrio. The triumph of the character drawing of Valdés is in Venturita, the younger sister—charming, beauti-

ful, seductive—who allured Gonzalo from his duty and his contentment. In the figure of the Duke, the egotistic, sensual, esthetic, and *blasé* man of the old nobility, it is easy to recognize a modern type presented often by the pessimist, Padre Coloma; but Valdés makes him individual and novel. One of the steps that lead to the end is the noteworthy scene of the picture. It is not reticently done—the process of the unveiling of the husband's eyes is not discreetly softened, as it is in the case of Rawdon Crawley by Thackeray. Nothing is left in doubt, though the end is different. Rawdon Crawley did not love his wife as Gonzalo loved Venturita, nor had he surrendered honor itself for her, and he would not die because, though she had treacherously betrayed him, he could live without her.

Cecilia makes the greatest sacrifice a woman can make, that of her good name—not to save her sister, but to save the man she loves from the madness she knows will come upon him should he learn the truth. And, in this episode, the fineness of the art of Valdés is shown. It is an old situation—as old as the earliest Italian romance; it reeks with the smell of gas and the orange-peel of the melodramas

of the nineteenth century. Many ladies in the theatre and in the novels exist only that, at the right moment, they should put themselves innocently in an equivocal position, to thrill the reader with their heroism. But the art of Valdés makes it new, and deprives it both of stupidity and indecency. About the central persons of the tragedy walk, talk, laugh, grieve, love, and hate the burghers of the town of Sarrio—this town of the fourth estate; no two are alike; the smallest person of the crowd is distinct and differentiated.

The minor characters in "Pepita Jiménez" are admirably drawn, too, but there are fewer of them; by comparison, one can not help wishing that Valdés had more of Valera's cheerful tolerance. He is sometimes relentlessly pitiless, as in the case of Galino Maza, the retired naval officer, of M. Delaunay, the Belgian engineer, and of the eager agitator, Sinforoso Suarez; and this is the more remarkable as there are occasions of great seriousness when he is almost absurdly gay. These passages have the effect on the reader that the reply of an amiable Tagalog, in Philippine "store" clothes, had on the grave clergyman who asked him what his neighbors would do to the public school teachers

when these devoted folk should go among them. "Kill them, of course," the ingenuous savage replied, with a fetching and happy smile. One forgives Valdés because there are only a few flies of this kind in the amber.

There is nothing to forgive in "Pepita Jiménez" —the style and the fable go well together. Here, as Coventry Patmore says, "there is no sense of dislocation or incompatibility between the natural and spiritual." To the Puritan mind, Pepita is very shocking, and the means by which she awakens the mistaken young acolyte from his dreams of an impossible mysticism as horrible as the subterfuge of Marianna in "Measure for Measure." But the wise old ecclesiastic, who knows that the perfection of celibacy is not for all, watches the case, smiles, and forgives. English taste and English morals require that Don Luis—in fiction—should kill himself after the manner of Lucretia; but Valera is less exacting, and more true to life. The preface to "Pepita Jiménez" is one of the most delicious pieces of writing in any language. To the English mind the story represents the failure of the ideal to overcome the material—a failing which, under the circumstances, was necessary. To the Spanish

mind, imbued with the principles of Catholicism, the motive is entirely different; Don Luis, the false mystic, does not fall essentially; he rises to a knowledge of his own nature, and he is happy because he, in time to save himself, recognizes in time its limitations and its true vocation. It would be a bold man who would excuse the grave Don Luis and the pious Pepita; let us leave them, as Valera leaves them, very charitably and gaily.

There is very little cheerfulness in "Doña Perfecta." There is, however, great power of description and terrible intensity of bitterness. One leaves Sarrio with regret; one even wants to go back to the spot where agonized Gonzalo dropped into the sea, to observe Cecilia, with his children, praying in the church; but one does not care to return to the town of Orbajosa, with all its dignities. Galdós's Rosarito is sweet, innocent, lovely, the Lucy of Lammermoor or the Ophelia of modern Spanish literature; she is more like Lucy and less like Ophelia. Pepe is a conceited young fellow, of good intentions and fine talent, who has neither common sense nor tact. The town is full of prejudices. Pepe, fresh from the scientific schools of Madrid, outrages them all. In spite of this, he has

our sympathies, for all the world loves a lover. Doña Perfecta, proud, cold, unscrupulous, mistakes bigotry for spirituality and the exterior form for the sacred heart beneath the symbols of religion. She is beloved in the town because she seems to be serenely good—and she is good when no human being crosses her will. Galdós seems to hate her from the first moment she enters; she is to point his moral that religion—of the formal sort—destroys the law rather than fulfils it. And she does point it with a vengeance.

Rosarito, her daughter of pearl, of alabaster, compact of soft sighs and tender fears, and devotion to the things of Heaven, loves Pepe. And he, as his father intends, loves her. But Doña Perfecta and all the country about conspire against him—all, according to their own point of view, for the love of God. They are too blind to see that, under the "scientific" bumptiousness of Pepe, there is a faith in God as strong and more simple than their own. Doña Perfecta draws out the evil from those around her, that Pepe, who has outraged all her beliefs, opinions, and prejudices, may be forced back to Madrid. Hypocrisy and hatred spring up wherever she moves, seemingly as pure and kind as

the Lady in Milton's "Comus." Rosarito's love awakens depth in what seems surface shallowness, and she stakes all on her faith in Pepe. The intense scene at the foot of the crucifix is the great moment of the novel; and, after that, Pepe's awful dread grows on him. It is the dread of a soul in the dark, surrounded by avenging forms. Rosarito fails him through weakness, and the end comes; but the real tragedy is not for them that die, but for them that live. "Doña Perfecta" is a realistic novel, not of detail, or analysis, not of physiology, but of psychology. Its thesis is modern—of the time of the beginning of Darwinism—but its pathos and humanity are of all time. It would have been better if the thesis were not so evident, for then Doña Perfecta might have been permitted to have one moment of womanly weakness, and this would have redeemed her. With all its bitterness and didacticism, "Doña Perfecta" deserves, as a sociological study, a place in this trilogy representing the modern novels of Spain. More than that, there are passages of such luminous atmosphere that only an author with more genius than talent could have written them.

MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN.

LIFE OF VALERA

IT would be hard to count up even a very small number of professional diplomats who have made a permanent impression through literary achievement. But America, a country noted for entrusting its interests abroad to novices, has sent forth two such amateur representatives highly distinguished in the field of *belles-lettres*. Each of these went to Spain as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary—Washington Irving at the behest of President Tyler, and James Russell Lowell upon appointment by President Hayes. In return, Alfonso XII issued credentials to the novelist and essayist Don Juan Valera y Alcalá Galiano, which were presented at Washington during Arthur's administration.

Don Juan Valera had, however, the advantage over Irving and Lowell of possessing considerable diplomatic experience, as in his younger days he had served at Naples, Lisbon, Rio de Janeiro,

Dresden, and St. Petersburg. He was versed in home politics as well, for the year 1859 saw him elected a member of the Cortes, and he subsequently held Cabinet rank as Secretary of Commerce. His next official post was that of Spanish Minister at Frankfort, where he remained until 1867. The following year was one of revolution in his country, the republican government creating him director of national education, the honors of the Senate and a privy councilorship being yet in store for him.

Thus far, Don Juan had done little to earn that universal admiration for his literary talents which came to him after the publication of "Pepita Jiménez" (1874). Still, an early book of poems, three volumes of miscellaneous essays, a translation of the Greek romance "Daphnis and Chloë," and a rendition from the German of Friedrich von Schack's admirable work on Moorish art and poetry in Spain, gave him sufficient credit to obtain a seat in the Spanish Academy and a hearing as public lecturer. The social life of this author had been brilliant at the outset. His parents were both pure-blooded aristocrats, the father an admiral in the Spanish navy, the mother

a lady of title and ancient lineage. Don Juan was born at Cabra, Andalusia, on the 18th of October, 1824, and after the usual schooling took up the study of philosophy at Malaga. Then he went to another university, at Granada, to take a course of law. But at neither seat of learning was he conspicuous for industry. On the contrary, he was well known at both places and at Madrid for a gay, reckless young man of the world, as amiable as he was extravagant. His light love affairs, gambling escapades, feats of horsemanship, and bull-fighting exploits, of course ingratiated him with the gilded youth of the capital, and by no means formed a bar to welcome in fashionable circles.

But long before "Pepita Jiménez" appeared, Don Juan's blood had cooled, and he had, as chronicled above, served his country usefully. To her literature he also added several other works of fiction, besides composing a number of more ephemeral writings. These consist in short tales, literary criticisms, philosophical and sociological essays, political articles, and what not. From 1879 to 1885 he collaborated with Modesto Lafuente in a six-volume history of Spain, and as late as 1903

published a book of essays and sketches entitled "The Superman." His best known novels, apart from "Pepita Jiménez," are "The Illusions of Doctor Faustino," "Commander Mendoza," and "Doña Luz"; they were all printed within five years of the work selected for the "Foreign Classical Romances."

AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE FIRST AMERICAN EDITION

To the MESSRS. APPLETON:

Gentlemen:—It was my intention to write a preface for the purpose of authorizing the edition you are about to publish in English of "Pepita Jiménez"; but, on thinking the matter over, I was deterred by the recollection of an anecdote that I heard in my young days.

A certain gallant, wishing to be presented at the house of a rich man who was about to give a magnificent ball, availed himself for that purpose of the services of a friend, who boasted of his familiarity with the great man, and of the favor he enjoyed with him. They proceeded to the great man's house, and the gallant got his introduction; but the great man said to him who had introduced the other: "And you, who is to introduce you, for I am not acquainted with you?" As I entertain a profound respect and affection for this country, and have not, besides, the assurance that such an

occasion would require, it would not do for me to say what the introducer of my story is said to have answered: "I need no one to introduce or to recommend me, for I am just now going away."

I infer from my story, as its evident moral, that I ought to refrain from addressing the public of the United States, to which I am entirely unknown as an author, notwithstanding the fact of my having maintained pleasant and friendly relations with its Government as the representative of my own.

The most judicious and prudent course I can adopt, then, is to limit myself to returning you earnest thanks for asking from me an authorization of which you did not stand in need, either by law or by treaty, for wishing to make known to your countrymen the least insipid of the products of my unfruitful genius, and for your generous purpose of conceding to me author's rights.

This, however, does not preclude the fact that, in thus expressing my thanks to you publicly, I incur a responsibility which I did not assume on any other occasion, either in Germany, Italy, or any other country where my works have been translated; for then, if they failed to please the public, although the fact might pain me, I could

still shrug my shoulders, and throw the blame of failure on the translator, or the publisher; but in this case I make myself your accomplice, and share or rather receive, all the disgrace of failure, if failure there should be.

"Pepita Jiménez" has enjoyed a wide celebrity, not only in Spain, but in every other Spanish-speaking country. I am very far from thinking that we Spaniards of the present day are either more easily satisfied, less cultured than, or possessed of an inferior literary taste to, the inhabitants of any other region of the globe; but this does not suffice to dispel my misgivings that my novel may be received with indifference or with censure by a public somewhat prejudiced against Spain by fanciful and injurious preconceptions.

My novel, both in essence and form, is distinctively national and classic. Its merits—supposing it to have such—consist in the language and the style, and not in the incidents, which are of the most commonplace, or in the plot, which, if it can be said to have any, is of the simplest.

The characters are not wanting, as I think, in individuality, or in such truth to human nature as makes them seem like living beings; but, the action

being so slight, this is brought out and made manifest by means of a subtle analysis, and by the language chosen to express the emotions, both of which may in the translation be lost. There is, besides, in my novel a certain irony, good-humored and frank, and a certain humor, resembling rather the humor of the English than the *esprit* of the French, which qualities, although happily they do not depend upon puns, or a play upon words, but are in the subject itself, require, in order that they may appear in the translation, that this should be made with extreme care.

In conclusion, the chief cause of the extraordinary favor with which "Pepita Jiménez" was received in Spain is something that may fail to be noticed here by careless readers.

I am an advocate of art for art's sake. I think it is very bad taste, always impertinent, and often pedantic, to attempt to prove theses by writing stories. For such a purpose dissertations or books purely and severely didactic should be written. The object of a novel should be to charm, through a faithful representation of human actions and human passions, and to create by this fidelity to nature a beautiful work. The object of art is the

creation of the beautiful, and whoever applies it to any other end, of however great utility this end may be, debases it. But it may chance, through a conjunction of favorable circumstances, by a happy inspiration—because in a given moment everything is disposed as by enchantment, or by supernatural influences—that an author's soul may become like a clear and magic mirror wherein are reflected all the ideas and all the sentiments that animate the eclectic spirit of his country, and in which these ideas and these sentiments lose their discordance, and group and combine themselves in pleasing agreement and harmony.

Herein is the explanation of the interest of "Pepita Jiménez." It was written when Spain was agitated to its centre, and everything was thrown out of its regular course by a radical revolution that at the same time shook to their foundations the throne and religious unity. It was written when everything in fusion, like molten metal, might readily amalgamate, and be molded into new forms. It was written when the strife raged fiercest between ancient and modern ideals; and, finally, it was written in all the plenitude of my powers, when my soul was sanest and most joyful

in the possession of an enviable optimism and an all-embracing love and sympathy for humanity that, to my misfortune, can never again find place within my breast.

If I had endeavored by dialectics and by reasoning to conciliate opinions and beliefs, the disapprobation would have been general; but, as the conciliating and syncretic spirit manifested itself naturally in a diverting story, every one accepted and approved it, each one drawing from my book the conclusions that best suited himself. Thus it was that, from the most orthodox Jesuit father down to the most rabid revolutionist, and from the ultra-Catholic who cherishes the dream of restoring the Inquisition, to the rationalist who is the irreconcilable enemy of every religion, all were pleased with "Pepita Jiménez."

It would be curious, and not inopportune, to explain here how it came about that I succeeded in pleasing every one without intending it, without knowing it, and, as it were, by chance.

There was in Spain, some years ago, a conservative minister who had sent a godson of his to study philosophy in Germany. By rare good fortune this godson, who was called Julian Sanz del

Rio, was a man of clear and profound intelligence, of unwearied application, and endowed with all the qualities necessary to make of him a sort of apostle. He studied, he formulated his system, he obtained the chair of metaphysics in the University of Madrid, and he founded a school, from which has since issued a brilliant pleiad of philosophers and statesmen, and of men illustrious for their learning, their eloquence, and their virtues. Chief among them are Nicolas Salmeron, Francisco Giner, Gumersindo Azcarate, Frederico de Castro, and Urbano Gonzalez Serrano.

The clerical party soon began to stir up strife against the master, the scholars, and the doctrines taught by them. They accused them of mystical pantheism.

I, who had ridiculed, at times, the confused terms, the pomp of words, and the method which the new philosophers made use of, regarded these philosophers, nevertheless, with admiration, and took up their defense—an almost solitary champion—in periodicals and reviews.

I had already maintained, before this, that our great dogmatic theologians, and especially the celebrated Domingo de Soto, were more liberal

than the liberal rationalists of the present day, affirming, as they do, the sovereignty of the people by divine right; for if, as St. Paul declares, all authority proceeds from God, it does so through the medium of the people whom God inspires to found it; and because the only authority that proceeds directly from God is that of the Church.

I then set myself to demonstrate that, if Sanz del Rio and his followers were pantheists, our mystical theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were pantheists also; and that, if the former had for predecessors Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Krause, St. Theresa, St. John de la Cruz, and the inspired and ecstatic Father Miguel de la Fuente followed, as their model, Tauler and others of the Germans. In saying this, however, it was not my intention to deny the claims of any of these mystical writers as founders of their school in Spain, but only to recognize, in this unbroken transmission of doctrine, the progressive continuity of European civilization.

For the purpose of carrying forward my undertaking, I read and studied with ardor every Spanish book on devotion, asceticism, and mysticism that fell into my hands, growing every day more

charmed with the richness of our literature in such works; with the treasures of poetry contained in them; with the boldness and independence of their authors; with the profound and delicate observation, in which they excel the Scottish school, that they display in examining the faculties of the soul; and with their power of entering into themselves, of penetrating to the very centre of the mind, in order there to behold God, and to unite themselves with God, not therefore losing their own personality, or their capacity for an active life, but issuing from the ecstasies and ravishments of divine love more apt than before for every work that can benefit the human species, as the steel is more finely tempered, polished, and bright after it has burned in the fires of the forge.

Of all this, on its most poetic and easily understood side, I wished to give a specimen to the Spanish public of to-day, who had forgotten it; but, as I was a man of my epoch, a layman, not very exemplary as regards penitential practises, and had the reputation of a freethinker, I did not venture to undertake doing this in my own name, and I created a theological student who should do it in his. I then fancied that I could paint with more vivid-

ness the ideas and the feelings of this student by contrasting them with an earthly love; and this was the origin of "Pepita Jiménez." Thus, when it was farthest from my thoughts, did I become a novelist. My novel had, therefore, the freshness and the spontaneity of the unpremeditated.

The novels I wrote afterward, with premeditation, are inferior to this one.

"Pepita Jiménez" pleased the public, also, as I have said, by its transcendentalism.

The rationalists supposed that I had rejected the old ideals, as my hero casts off the clerical garb. And the believers, with greater unanimity and truth, compared me with the false prophet who went forth to curse the people of Israel, and without intending it exalted and blessed them. What is certain is that, if it be allowable to draw any conclusion from a story, the inference that may be deduced from mine is, that faith in an all-seeing and personal God, and in the love of this God, who is present in the depths of the soul, even when we refuse to follow the higher vocation to which He would persuade and solicit us—even were we carried away by the violence of mundane passions to commit, like Don Luis, almost all the capital sins

in a single day—elevates the soul, purifies the other emotions, sustains human dignity, and lends poetry, nobility, and holiness to the commonest state, condition, and manner of life.

Such is, in my opinion, the novel you are now about to present to the American public; for I repeat that I have not the right to make the presentation.

Perhaps, independent of its transcendentalism, my novel may serve to interest and amuse your public for a couple of hours, and may obtain some favor with it; for it is a public that reads a great deal, that is indulgent, and that differs from the English public—which is eminently exclusive in its tastes—by its generous and cosmopolitan spirit.

I have always regarded as a delusion of national vanity the belief that there is, or the hope that there ever will be, anything that, with legitimate and candid independence, may be called American literature. Greece diffused herself through the world in flourishing colonies, and, after the conquests of Alexander, founded powerful states in Egypt, in Syria, and even in Bactriana, among peoples who, unlike the American Indians, possessed a high civilization of their own. But, notwith-

standing this dispersion, and this political severance from the mother-country, the literature of Syracuse, of Antioch, and of Alexandria was as much Greek literature as was the literature of Athens. In my opinion, then, and for the same reason, the literature of New York and Boston will continue to be as much English literature as the literature of London and Edinburgh; the literature of Mexico and Buenos Ayres will continue to be as much Spanish literature as the literature of Madrid; the literature of Rio Janeiro will be as much Portuguese literature as the literature of Lisbon. Political union may be severed, but, between peoples of the same tongue and the same race, the ties of spiritual fraternity are indissoluble, so long as their common civilization lasts. There are immortal kings or emperors who reign and rule in America by true divine right, and against whom no Washington or Bolivar shall prevail—no Franklin succeed in plucking from them their sceptre. These tyrants are called Miguel de Cervantes, William Shakespeare, and Luiz de Camöens.

All this does not prevent the new nation from bringing to the common fund, and *pro indiviso,*

of the culture of their race, rich elements, fine traits of character, and perhaps even higher qualities. Thus it is that I observe, in this American literature, of English origin and language, a certain largeness of views, a certain cosmopolitanism and affectionate comprehension of what is foreign, broad as the continent itself which the Americans inhabit, and which forms a contrast to the narrow exclusivism of the insular English. It is because of these qualities that I venture to hope now for a favorable reception of my little book; and it is in these qualities that I found my hope that the fruits of Spanish genius in general will, in future, be better known and more highly esteemed here than in Great Britain.

Already, to some extent, Irving, Prescott, Ticknor, Longfellow, Howells, and others have contributed, with judgment and discretion, translating, criticizing, and eulogizing our authors, to the realization of this hope.

Forgive my wearying you with this letter, and believe me to be sincerely yours,

JUAN VALERA.

NEW YORK, *April 18, 1886.*

PEPITA JIMÉNEZ

DISCOVERY OF THE MANUSCRIPT

"NESCIT LABI VIRTUS"

THE reverend Dean of the Cathedral of ——, deceased a few years since, left among his papers a bundle of manuscript, tied together, which, passing from hand to hand, finally fell into mine, without, by some strange chance, having lost a single one of the documents contained in it. Inscribed on this manuscript were the Latin words I use above as a motto, but without the addition of the woman's name I now prefix to it as its title; and this inscription has probably contributed to the preservation of the papers, since, thinking them, no doubt, to be sermons, or other theological matter, no one before me had made any attempt to untie the string of the package, or to read a single page of it.

The manuscript is in three parts. The first is entitled "Letters from my Nephew"; the second, "Paralipomena"; and the third, "Epilogue—Letters from my Brother."

All three are in the same handwriting, which, it

may be inferred, is that of the reverend Dean; and as taken together they form something like a novel, I at first thought that perhaps the reverend Dean wished to exercise his genius in composing one in his leisure hours; but, looking at the matter more closely, and observing the natural simplicity of the style, I am inclined to think now that it is no novel at all, but that the letters are copies of genuine epistles which the reverend Dean tore up, burned, or returned to their owners, and that the narrative part only, designated by the pedantic title of "Paralipomena," is the work of the reverend Dean, added for the purpose of completing the story with incidents not related in the letters.

However this may be, I confess that I did not find the reading of these papers tiresome; I found them, indeed, rather interesting than otherwise; and as nowadays everything is published, I have decided to publish them too, without further investigation, changing only the proper names, so that if those who bear them be still living they may not find themselves figuring in a book without desiring or consenting to it.

The letters contained in the first part seem to have been written by a very young man, with some theoretical but no practical knowledge of the world, whose life was passed in the house of the reverend Dean, his uncle, and in the seminary, and

who was imbued with an exalted religious fervor and an earnest desire to be a priest.

We shall call this young man Don Luis de Vargas.

The aforesaid manuscript, faithfully transferred to print, is as follows.

PART I

LETTERS FROM MY NEPHEW

March 22d.

FOUR days ago I arrived in safety at this my native village, where I found my father, and the reverend vicar, as well as our friends and relations, all in good health. The happiness of seeing them and conversing with them has so completely occupied my time and thoughts that I have not been able to write to you until now.

You will pardon me for this.

Having left this place a mere child, and coming back a man, the impression produced upon me by all those objects that I had treasured up in my memory is a singular one. Everything appears to me more diminutive, much more diminutive, but also more pleasing to the eye, than my recollection of it. My father's house, which in my imagination was immense, is, indeed, the large house of a rich husbandman, but still much smaller than the seminary. What I now understand and appreciate better than formerly is the country around here. The orchards, above all, are delightful. What charming paths there are through them!

On one side, and sometimes on both, crystal waters flow with a pleasant murmur. The banks of these streams are covered with odorous herbs and flowers of a thousand different hues. In a few minutes one may gather a large bunch of violets. The paths are shaded by majestic trees, chiefly walnut and fig trees; and the hedges are formed of blackberry bushes, roses, pomegranates, and honeysuckle.

The multitude of birds that enliven grove and field is marvelous.

I am enchanted with the orchards, and I spend a couple of hours walking in them every afternoon.

My father wishes to take me to see his olive plantations, his vineyards, his farmhouses; but of all this we have as yet seen nothing. I have not been outside of the village and the charming orchards that surround it.

It is true, indeed, that the numerous visits I receive do not leave me a moment to myself.

Five different women have come to see me, all of whom were my nurses, and have embraced and kissed me.

Every one gives me the diminutive "Luisito," or "Don Pedro's boy," although I have passed my twenty-second birthday; and every one inquires of my father for "the boy," when I am not present.

I imagine I shall make but little use of the books I have brought with me to read, as I am not left alone for a single instant.

The dignity of squire, which I supposed to be a matter for jest, is, on the contrary, a serious matter. My father is the squire of the village.

There is hardly any one here who can understand what they call my caprice of entering the priesthood, and these good people tell me, with rustic candor, that I ought to throw aside the clerical garb; that to be a priest is very well for a poor young man; but that I, who am to be a rich man's heir, should marry, and console the old age of my father by giving him half a dozen handsome and robust grandchildren.

In order to flatter my father and myself, both men and women declare that I am a splendid fellow, that I am of an angelic disposition, that I have a very roguish pair of eyes, and other stupid things of a like kind, that annoy, disgust, and humiliate me, although I am not very modest, and am too well acquainted with the meanness and folly of the world to be shocked or frightened at anything.

The only defect they find in me is that I am too thin through overstudy. In order to have me grow fat they propose not to allow me either to study or even to look at a book while I remain here; and, besides this, to make me eat of as many choice dishes of meats and confectionery as they know how to concoct in the village.

It is quite clear—I am to be stall-fed. There is

not a single family of our acquaintance that has not sent me some token of regard. Now it is a sponge-cake, now a meat-salad, now a pyramid of sweetmeats, now a jug of syrup.

And these presents, which they send to the house, are not the only attentions they show me. I have also been invited to dinner by three or four of the principal persons of the village.

To-morrow I am to dine at the house of the famous Pepita Jiménez, of whom you have doubtless heard. No one here is ignorant of the fact that my father is paying her his addresses.

My father, notwithstanding his fifty-five years, is so well preserved that the finest young men of the village might feel envious of him. He possesses, besides, the powerful attraction, irresistible to some women, of his past conquests, of his celebrity, of his—of course exaggerated—reputation as a modern rival to that national rake, Don Juan Tenorio.

I have not yet made the acquaintance of Pepita Jiménez. Every one says she is very beautiful. I suspect she will turn out to be a village beauty, and somewhat rustic. From what I have heard of her I can not quite decide whether, ethically speaking, she is good or bad; but I am quite certain that she is possessed of great natural intelligence. Pepita is about twenty years old, and a widow; her married life lasted only three years. She was the

daughter of Doña Francisca Galvez, the widow, as you know, of a retired captain,

> "Who left her at his death,
> As sole inheritance, his honorable sword,"

as the poet says. Until her sixteenth year Pepita lived with her mother in very straitened circumstances—bordering, indeed, upon absolute want.

She had an uncle called Don Gumersindo, the possessor of a small entailed estate, one of those petty estates that, in olden times, owed their foundation to a foolish vanity. Any ordinary person, with the income derived from this estate, would have lived in continual difficulties, burdened by debts, and altogether cut off from the display and ceremony proper to his rank. But Don Gumersindo was an extraordinary person—the very genius of economy. It could not be said of him that he created wealth himself, but he was endowed with a wonderful faculty of absorption with respect to the wealth of others; and in regard to dispensing, it would be difficult to find any one on the face of the globe with whose maintenance, preservation, and comfort, Mother Nature and human industry ever had less reason to trouble themselves. No one knows how he lived; but the fact is that he reached the age of eighty, saving his entire income, and adding to his capital by lending money on unquestionable security. No one here speaks of him

as a usurer; on the contrary, he is considered to have been of a charitable disposition, because, being moderate in all things, he was so even in usury, and would ask only ten per cent a year, while throughout the district they ask twenty and even thirty per cent, and still think it little.

In the practise of this species of industry and economy, and with thoughts dwelling constantly on increasing instead of diminishing his capital, indulging neither in the luxury of matrimony and of having a family, nor even of smoking, Don Gumersindo arrived at the age I have mentioned, the possessor of a fortune considerable anywhere, and here regarded as enormous, thanks to the poverty of these villages, and to the habit of exaggeration natural to the Andalusians.

Don Gumersindo, always extremely neat and clean in his person, was an old man who did not inspire repugnance.

The articles of his modest wardrobe were somewhat worn, but carefully brushed and without a stain; although from time immemorial he had always been seen with the same cloak, the same jacket, and the same trousers and waistcoat. People sometimes asked each other in vain if any one had ever seen him wear a new garment.

With all these defects, which here and elsewhere many regard as virtues, though virtues in excess, Don Gumersindo possessed excellent qualities; he

was affable, obliging, compassionate; and did his utmost to please and to be of service to everybody, no matter what trouble, anxiety, or fatigue it might cost him, provided only it did not cost him money. Of a cheerful disposition, and fond of fun and joking, he was to be found at every feast and merry-making around that was not got up at his expense, which he enlivened by the amenity of his manners, and by his discreet although not very Attic conversation. He had never had any tender inclination for any one woman in particular, but, innocently and without malice, he loved them all; and was the most given to complimenting the girls, and making them laugh, of any old man for ten leagues around.

I have already said that he was the uncle of Pepita. When he was nearing his eightieth year she was about to complete her sixteenth. He was rich; she, poor and friendless.

Her mother was a vulgar woman of limited intelligence and coarse instincts. She worshiped her daughter, yet lamented continually and with bitterness the sacrifices she made for her, the privations she suffered, and the disconsolate old age and melancholy end that awaited her in the midst of her poverty. She had, besides, a son, older than Pepita, who had a well-deserved reputation in the village as a gambler and a quarrelsome fellow, and for whom, after many difficulties, she had suc-

ceeded in obtaining an insignificant employment in Havana; thus finding herself rid of him, and with the sea between them. After he had been a few years in Havana, however, he lost his situation on account of his bad conduct, and thereupon began to shower letters upon his mother, containing demands for money. The latter, who had scarcely enough for herself and for Pepita, grew desperate at this, broke out into abuse, cursed herself and her destiny with a perseverance but little resembling the theological virtue, and ended by fixing all her hopes upon settling her daughter well, as the only way of getting out of her difficulties.

In this distressing situation Don Gumersindo began to frequent the house of Pepita and her mother, and to pay attentions to the former with more ardor and persistence than he had shown in his attentions to other girls. Nevertheless, to suppose that a man who had passed his eightieth year without wishing to marry, should think of committing such a folly, with one foot already in the grave, was so wild and improbable a notion that Pepita's mother, still less Pepita herself, never for a moment suspected the audacious intentions of Don Gumersindo.

Thus it was that both were struck one day with amazement when, after a good many compliments, between jest and earnest, Don Gumersindo, with the greatest seriousness and without

the least hesitation, proposed the following categorical question:

"Pepita, will you marry me?"

Although the question came at the end of a great deal of joking, and might itself be taken for a joke, Pepita, who, inexperienced though she was in worldly matters, yet knew by a certain instinct of divination that is in all women, and especially in young girls, no matter how innocent they may be, that this was said in earnest, grew as red as a cherry and said nothing. Her mother answered in her stead:

"Child, don't be ill-bred; answer your uncle as you should: 'With much pleasure, uncle—whenever you wish.' "

This "with much pleasure, uncle—whenever you wish," came then, it is said, and many times afterward, almost mechanically from the trembling lips of Pepita, in obedience to the admonitions, the sermons, the complaints, and even the imperious mandate of her mother.

I see, however, that I am enlarging too much on this matter of Pepita Jiménez and her history; but she interests me, as I suppose she should interest you too, since, if what they affirm here be true, she is to be your sister-in-law and my stepmother.

I shall endeavor, notwithstanding, to avoid dwelling on details, and to relate briefly what

perhaps you already know, though you have been away from here so long.

Pepita Jiménez was married to Don Gumersindo. The tongue of slander was let loose against her, both in the days preceding the wedding and for some months afterward.

In fact, from the point of view of morals, this marriage was a matter that will admit of discussion; but, so far as the girl herself is concerned, if we remember her mother's prayers, her complaints, and even her commands—if we take into consideration the fact that Pepita thought by this means to procure for her mother a comfortable old age, and to save her brother from dishonor and infamy, constituting herself his guardian angel and his earthly providence, we must confess that our condemnation will admit of some abatement. Besides, who shall penetrate into the recesses of the heart, into the hidden secrets of the immature mind of a young girl, brought up, probably, in the most absolute seclusion and ignorance of the world, in order to know what idea she might have formed to herself of marriage? Perhaps she thought that to marry this old man meant to devote her life to his service, to be his nurse, to soothe his old age, to save him from a solitude and abandonment embittered by his infirmities, and in which only mercenary hands should minister to him; in a word, to cheer and illumine his declining years with the

glowing beams of her beauty and her youth, like an angel who has taken human form. If something of this, or all of this, was what the girl thought, and if she failed to perceive the full significance of her act, then its morality is placed beyond question.

However this may be, leaving aside psychological investigations that I have no authority for making, since I am not acquainted with Pepita Jiménez, it is quite certain that she lived in edifying harmony with the old man during three years, that she nursed him and waited upon him with admirable devotion, and that in his last painful and fatal sickness she ministered to him and watched over him with tender and unwearying affection, until he expired in her arms, leaving her heiress to a large fortune.

Although more than two years have passed since she lost her mother, and more than a year and a half since she was left a widow, Pepita still wears the deepest mourning. Her sedateness, her retired manner of living, and her melancholy, are such that one might suppose she lamented the death of her husband as much as though he had been a handsome young man. Perhaps there are some who imagine or suspect that Pepita's pride, and the certain knowledge she now has of the not very poetical means by which she has become rich, trouble her awakened and more than scrupulous conscience;

and that, humiliated in her own eyes and in those of the world, she seeks, in austerity and retirement, consolation for the vexations of her mind, and balm for her wounded heart.

People here, as everywhere, have a great love of money. Perhaps I am wrong in saying, *as everywhere;* in populous cities, in the great centres of civilization, there are other distinctions which are prized as much as, or even more than, money, because they smooth the way to fortune, and give credit and consideration in the eyes of the world; but in smaller places, where neither literary nor scientific fame, nor, as a rule, distinction of manners, nor elegance, nor discretion and amenity in intercourse, are apt to be either valued or understood, there is no other way by which to adjust the social hierarchy than the possession of more or less money, or of something worth money. Pepita, then, in the possession of money, and beauty besides, and making a good use, as every one says, of her riches, is to-day respected and esteemed in an extraordinary degree. From this and the surrounding villages the most eligible suitors, the wealthiest young men, have crowded to pay their court to her. But, so far as can be seen, she rejects them all, though with the utmost sweetness, for she wishes to make no one her enemy; and it is commonly supposed that her soul is filled with the most ardent devotion, and that it is her fixed intention

to dedicate her life to practises of charity and religious piety.

My father, according to the general opinion, has not succeeded better than her other suitors; but Pepita, to fulfil the adage that "courtesy and candor are consistent with each other," takes the greatest pains to give him proofs of a frank, affectionate, and disinterested friendship. She is unremitting in her attentions to him, and when he tries to speak to her of love she brings him to a stop with a sermon delivered with the most winning sweetness, recalling to his memory his past faults, and endeavoring to undeceive him in regard to the world and its vain pomps.

I confess that I begin to have some curiosity to know this woman, so much do I hear her spoken of! nor do I think my curiosity is without foundation, or that there is anything in it either vain or sinful. I myself feel the truth of what Pepita says; I myself desire that my father, in his advanced years, should enter upon a better life; should forget, and not seek to renew, the agitations and passions of his youth; and should attain to the enjoyment of a tranquil, happy, and honorable old age. I differ from Pepita's way of thinking in one thing only: I believe my father would succeed in this rather by marrying a good and worthy woman who loved him, than by remaining without a wife. For this very reason I desire to become acquainted with

Pepita, in order to know if she be this woman; for I am to a certain extent troubled—and perhaps there is in this feeling something of family pride, which, if it be wrong, I desire to cast out—by the disdain, however honeyed and gracious, of the young widow.

If my situation were other than it is, I should prefer my father to remain unmarried. Then, being the only child, I should inherit all his wealth, and, as one might say, nothing less than the position of squire of the village. But you already know how firm is the resolution I have taken. Humble and unworthy though I be, I feel myself called to the priesthood, and the possessions of this world have but little power over my mind. If there is anything in me of the ardor of youth, and the vehemence of the passions proper to that age, it shall all be employed in nourishing an active and fecund charity. Even the many books you have given me to read, and my knowledge of the history of the ancient civilizations of the peoples of Asia, contribute to unite within me scientific curiosity with the desire of propagating the faith, and invite and animate me to go forth as a missionary to the far East. As soon as I leave this village, where you, my dear uncle, have sent me to pass some time with my father, and am raised to the dignity of the priesthood, and, ignorant and sinner as I am, feel myself invested by free and supernatural gift,

through the sovereign goodness of the Most High, with the power to absolve from sin, and with the mission to teach the peoples—as soon as I receive the perpetual and miraculous grace of handling with impure hands the very God made man, it is my purpose to leave Spain, and go forth to distant lands to preach the Gospel.

I am not actuated in this by vanity. I do not desire to believe myself superior to other men. The power of my faith, the constancy of which I feel myself capable, everything after the favor and grace of God, I owe to the judicious education, to the holy teaching, and to the good example I have received from you, my dear uncle.

There is something I hardly dare confess to myself, but which, against my will, presents itself with frequency to my mind; and, since it presents itself to my mind, it is my desire, it is my duty to confess it to you: it would be wrong for me to hide from you even my most secret and involuntary thoughts. You have taught me to analyze the feelings of the soul; to search for their origin, if it be good or evil; to make, in short, a scrupulous examination of conscience.

I have often reflected on two different methods of education: that of those who endeavor to keep the mind in innocence, confounding innocence with ignorance, and believing evil that is unknown to be avoided more easily than evil that is known; and

that of those, on the other hand, who courageously, and as soon as the pupil has arrived at the age of reason, show him, with due regard for modesty, evil in all its hideous ugliness and repulsive nakedness, to the end that he may abhor and avoid it.

According to my way of thinking, it is necessary to know evil in order the better to comprehend the infinite Divine goodness, the ideal and unattainable end of every virtuously born desire. I am grateful to you that you have made me to know, with the honey and the butter of your teaching, as the Scripture says, both good and evil, to the end that I should aspire to the one and condemn the other, knowingly and with discreet ardor. I rejoice that I am no longer in a state of mere innocence, and that I shall go forward in the progress toward virtue, and, in so far as is permitted to humanity, toward perfection, with a knowledge of all the tribulations, all the asperities that there are in the pilgrimage we are called upon to make through this valley of tears; as I am not ignorant, on the other hand, of how smooth, how easy, how pleasant, how flowery the road is in appearance that leads to perdition and eternal death.

Another thing for which I feel bound to be grateful to you is the indulgence, the toleration—not condescending nor lax, but, on the contrary, serious and thoughtful—with which you have been able

to inspire me for the errors and the sins of my fellow men.

I say all this to you because I wish to speak to you on a subject of so delicate a nature that I hardly find words in which to express myself concerning it. In short, I often ask myself whether the resolution I have adopted had not its origin, in part at least, in the character of my relations with my father. In the bottom of my heart have I been able to pardon him his conduct toward my poor mother, the victim of his errors?

I consider this matter carefully, and I can not find an atom of hatred in my breast. On the contrary, gratitude fills it entirely. My father has brought me up affectionately. He has tried to honor in me the memory of my mother, and one would have said that in my bringing up, in the care he took of me, in the indulgence with which he treated me, in his devotion to me as a child, he sought to appease her angry shade—if the shade, if the spirit of her who was on earth an angel of goodness and gentleness, could be capable of anger.

I repeat, then, that I am full of gratitude toward my father; he has acknowledged me, and, besides, he sent me at the age of ten years to you, to whom I owe all that I am.

If there is in my heart any germ of virtue, if there is in my mind any element of knowledge, if

there is in my will any honorable and good purpose, to you it is I owe it.

My father's affection for me is extraordinary; the estimation in which he holds me is far superior to my merits. Perhaps vanity may have something to do with this. In paternal love there is something selfish; it is, as it were, a prolongation of selfishness. If I were possessed of any merit, my father would regard it all as a creation of his own, as if I were an emanation of his personality, as much in spirit as in body. Be this as it will, however, I believe that my father loves me, and that there is in his affection something self-sustaining, and superior to all this pardonable selfishness of which I have spoken.

I experience a great consolation, a profound tranquillity of conscience—and for this I return most fervent thanks to God—when I discern the fact that the power of blood, the tie of nature, that mysterious bond that unites us, leads me, without any consideration of duty, to love my father and to reverence him. It would be horrible not to love him thus—to be compelled to force myself to love in order to obey a Divine command. Nevertheless —and here comes back my doubt—does my purpose of becoming a priest or a friar, of not accepting, or of accepting only a very small part of, the immense fortune that will be mine by inheritance, and which I might enjoy even during my father's

lifetime; does this proceed solely from my contempt of the things of this world, from a true vocation for a religious life, or does it not also proceed from pride, from hidden rancor, from resentment, from something in me that refuses to forgive what my mother herself, with sublime generosity, forgave? This doubt assails and torments me at times, but almost always I resolve it my favor, and come to the conclusion that I have no feeling of pride toward my father. I think I would accept from him all he has, if I were to need it, and I rejoice to be as grateful to him for little as for much.

Farewell, uncle. In future I will write to you often, and as much at length as you desire, if not quite so much so as to-day, lest I should appear prolix.

March 28th.

I BEGIN to be tired of my stay in this place, and every day the desire grows stronger within me to return to you and to receive my ordination. But my father wishes to accompany me. He wishes to be present at that solemn ceremony, and desires that I should remain here with him at least two months longer. He is so amiable, so affectionate with me, that it would be impossible for me not to gratify him in all his wishes. I shall remain here, therefore, for the time he desires. In order to give him pleasure I do violence to my feelings, and make an effort to seem interested in the amusements of the village, the country sports, and even shooting, in all of which I am his companion. I try to appear gayer and more animated than I am by nature. As in the village, half in jest, half by way of eulogy, I am called "The Saint," I endeavor, through modesty, to avoid the appearance of sanctity, or to soften and humanize its manifestations with the virtue of moderation, displaying a serene and decent cheerfulness which was never yet opposed to holiness nor to the saints. I confess, nevertheless, that the merry-making and the sports of these people, with their coarse jokes and boisterous mirth, weary me. I do not want to fall into the sin of scandal, nor to speak ill of any one, though

it be only to you and in confidence; but I often think that it would be a more difficult enterprise, as well as a more rational and meritorious one, to preach the Gospel to these people, and try to elevate their moral nature, than to go to India, Persia, or China, leaving so many of my country-people behind, who are, if not perverted, at least to some extent gone astray. Many, indeed, are of the opinion that modern ideas, that materialism and infidelity, are to blame for this. But if that be the case, if they it be that produce such evil effects, then it must be in some strange, diabolical, and miraculous manner, and not by natural means; since the fact is, that here the people read no books, either good or bad, so that I do not well see how they can be perverted by any evil doctrines the books in fashion may contain.

Can these evil doctrines be in the air, like a miasma or an epidemic? Perhaps—and I am sorry this thought, which I mention to you only, should occur to me—perhaps the clergy themselves are in fault? Are they, in Spain, equal to their mission? Do they go among the people, teaching and preaching to them? Are they all capable of this? Have those who consecrate themselves to a religious life and to the salvation of souls a true vocation for their calling? Or is it only a means of living, like any other, with this difference—that in our day only the poorest, only those who are without ex-

pectations and without means, devote themselves to it, for the very reason that this calling offers a less brilliant prospect than any other? Be that as it may, the very scarcity of virtuous and learned priests arouses all the more within me the desire to be a priest. I would not willingly let self-love deceive me. I recognize all my defects; but I feel within me a true vocation, and many of those defects it may still be possible, with the divine help, to correct.

The dinner at the house of Pepita Jiménez, which I mentioned to you, took place three days ago. As she leads so retired a life, I had not met her before; she seemed to me, in truth, as beautiful as she is said to be, and I noticed that her amiability with my father was such as to give him reason to hope, at least judging superficially, that she will yield to his wishes in the end, and accept his hand.

As there is a possibility of her becoming my stepmother, I have observed her with attention; she seems to me to be a remarkable woman, whose moral qualities I am not able to determine with exactitude. There is about her an air of calmness and serenity that may come either from coldness of heart and spirit, with great self-control and power of calculating effects, accompanied by little or no sensibility; or that may, on the other hand, proceed from the tranquillity of her conscience

and the purity of her aspirations, united to the purpose of fulfilling in this life the duties imposed upon her by society, while her hopes are fixed, meantime, upon loftier things, as their proper goal. What is certain is that, either because with this woman everything is the result of calculation, without any effort to elevate her mind to a higher sphere, or, it may be, because she blends in perfect harmony the prose of daily life with the poetry of her illusions, there is nothing discernible in her out of tone with her surroundings, although she possesses a natural distinction of manner that elevates her above and separates her from them all. She does not affect the dress of a provincial, nor does she, on the other hand, follow blindly the fashions of the city; she unites both these styles in her mode of dress in such a manner as to appear like a lady, but still a lady country-born and country-bred. She disguises to a great extent, as I think, the care she takes of her person. There is nothing about her to betray the use of cosmetics or the arts of the toilet. But the whiteness of her hands, the color and polish of her nails, and the grace and neatness of her attire denote a greater regard for such matters than might be looked for in one who lives in a village, and who is said, besides, to despise the vanities of this world and to think only of heavenly things.

Her house is exquisitely clean, and everything in

it reveals the most perfect order. The furniture is neither artistic nor elegant, nor is it, on the other hand, either pretentious or in bad taste. To give a poetic air to her surroundings, she keeps in the rooms and passages, as well as in the garden, a multitude of plants and flowers. There is not, indeed, among them any rare plant or exotic, but her plants and flowers, of the commonest species here, are tended with extraordinary care.

Canaries in gilded cages enliven the whole house with their songs. Its mistress, it is obvious, has need of living creatures on which to bestow some of her affection; and besides several maid-servants, that one would suppose she had selected with care, since it can not be by mere chance that they are all pretty, she has, after the fashion of old maids, various animals to keep her company—a parrot, a little dog, whose coat is of the whitest, and two or three cats, so tame and sociable that they jump up on one in the most friendly manner.

At one end of the principal saloon is a species of oratory, whose chief ornament is an *Infant Jesus,* carved in wood, with red and white cheeks and blue eyes, and altogether quite handsome. The dress is of white satin, with a blue cloak full of little golden stars; and the image is completely covered with jewels and trinkets. The little altar on which the figure is placed is adorned with

flowers, and around it are set pots of broom and bay; and on the altar itself, which is furnished with steps, a great many wax tapers are kept burning. When I behold all this I know not what to think, but for the most part I am inclined to believe that the widow loves herself above all things, and that it is for her recreation, and for the purpose of furnishing her with occasions for the effusion of this love, that she keeps the cats, the canaries, the flowers, and even the *Infant Jesus* itself, which, in her secret soul, perhaps does not occupy a place very much higher than the canaries and the cats.

It can not be denied that Pepita Jiménez is possessed of discretion. No silly jest, no impertinent question in regard to my vocation, and, above all, in regard to my approaching ordination, has crossed her lips. She conversed with me on matters relating to the village, about agriculture, the last crop of grapes and olives, and the means of improving the methods of making wine, expressing herself always with modesty and naturalness and without manifesting any desire of appearing to know more than others.

My father was at his best; he seemed to have grown younger, and his pressing attentions to the lady of his thoughts were received, if not with love, at least with gratitude.

There were present at dinner, the doctor, the

notary, and the reverend vicar, who is a great friend of the house and the spiritual father of Pepita.

The reverend vicar must have a very high opinion of her, for on several occasions he spoke to me apart of her charity, of the many alms she bestows, of her compassion and goodness to every one. In a word, he declared her to be a saint.

In view of what the vicar has told me, and relying on his judgment, I can do no less than wish that my father may marry Pepita. As my father is not fitted for a life of penance, in this way only could he hope to change his mode of life, that up to the present has been so dissipated, and settle down to a well-ordered and quiet, if not exemplary, old age.

When we reached our house, after leaving that of Pepita Jiménez, my father spoke to me seriously of his projects. He told me that in his time he had been very wild, that he had led a very bad life, and that he saw no way of reforming, notwithstanding his years, unless Pepita were to fall in love with and marry him.

Taking for granted, of course, that she would do so, my father then spoke about money matters. He told me that he was very rich, and would leave me amply provided for in his will, even though he should have other children. I answered him that for my plans and purposes in life I needed very

little money, and that my greatest satisfaction would always consist in knowing him to be happy with wife and children, his former evil ways forgotten.

My father then spoke to me of his tender hopes with a candor and eagerness that might make one suppose me to be the father and the old man, and he a youth of my age, or younger. In order to enhance the merit of his mistress and the difficulties of his conquest, he recounted to me the accomplishments and the excellences of the fifteen or twenty suitors who had already presented themselves to Pepita, and who had all been rejected. As for himself, as he explained to me, the same lot, to a certain extent, had been his also; but he flattered himself that this want of success was not final, since Pepita showed him so many kindnesses, and an affection so great that, if it were not love, it might easily, with time and the persistent homage he dedicated to her, be converted into love.

There was, besides, in my father's opinion, something fantastic and fallacious in the cause of Pepita's coldness, that must in the end wear away. Pepita did not wish to retire to a convent, nor did she incline to a penitential life. Notwithstanding her seclusion and her piety, it was easy to see that she took delight in pleasing. Her daintiness and dress and the care she bestowed upon her person

indeed exhibited little of the conventual. The cause of her coldness, then, my father declared to be, without a doubt, her pride—a pride to a certain extent well founded. She is naturally elegant and distinguished in appearance; both by her force of character and by her intelligence she is superior to those who surround her, no matter how she may seek, through modesty, to disguise it. How, then, should she bestow her hand upon any of the rustics who up to the present time have been her suitors? She imagines that her soul is filled with a mystic love of God, and that God only can satisfy it, because thus far no mortal has crossed her path intelligent enough and agreeable enough to make her forget even her image of the *Infant Jesus*. "Although it may seem conceited on my part," added my father, "I flatter myself that I am the happy man."

Such, dear uncle, are the occupations and the projects of my father here, and such the matters, so foreign to my nature, and to my aims and thoughts, of which he speaks to me with frequency, and on which he requires me to give an opinion.

It would almost seem as if your too indulgent opinion of my judgment had extended itself to the people here, for they all tell me their troubles, and ask my advice as to the course they should adopt. Even the reverend vicar, exposing himself

to the risk of betraying what might be called secrets of confession, has already come to consult me in regard to several cases of conscience that have presented themselves to him in the confessional.

One of these cases—related, like all the others, with much mystery, and without revealing the name of the person concerned—has greatly interested me.

The reverend vicar tells me that a certain penitent of his is troubled by scruples of conscience, because, while she feels herself irresistibly attracted toward a solitary and contemplative life, she yet fears at times that this devout fervor is not accompanied by a true humility, but that it is in part excited by, and has its source in, the demon of pride himself.

To love God in all things, to seek Him in the inmost recesses of the soul wherein He dwells, to purify ourselves from all earthly passions and affections, in order to unite ourselves to Him—these are, in truth, pious aspirations and virtuous inclinations; but the doubt arises in determining whether the source of these aspirations and inclinations be not an exaggerated self-love. "Have they their origin," the penitent, it seems, asks herself, "in the thought that I, although unworthy and a sinner, presume my soul to be of more value than the souls of my fellow-mortals—that the interior beauty of my mind and of my will would be

dimmed by harboring affection for the human beings by whom I am surrounded, and whom I deem unworthy of me? Do I love God above all things, infinitely, or only more than the little things that I know, and that I scorn and despise, that can not satisfy my heart? If my piety is founded upon this feeling, then there are in it two great defects: the first, that it is not based upon a pure love of God, full of humility and charity, but on pride; and the second, that this piety, because it is thus without foundation, is unstable and inefficacious. For who can be certain that the soul will not forget the love of its Creator, when it does not love Him infinitely, but only because there is no other being whom it deems worthy of endowing with its love?

It is concerning this case of conscience, refined and subtle enough thus to exercise the mind of a simple rustic, that the reverend vicar has come to consult me. I would have excused myself from saying anything in the matter, alleging, as a reason for doing so, my youth and inexperience; but the reverend vicar has shown himself so persistent in the matter that I could do no less than discuss the question with him. I said—and it would rejoice me greatly should you concur in my opinion—that what this troubled penitent requires is to regard those who sourround her with greater benevolence; to try to throw the cloak of charity over

their faults, instead of analyzing and dissecting them with the scalpel of criticism, bringing into relief and dwelling upon their good qualities, to the end that she may esteem and love them; to endeavor, in fact, to behold in every human being an object worthy of her love, a true fellow-creature, her equal, a soul wherein there is a treasure of good qualities and virtues—a being made, in short, in the image and likeness of God. Entertaining this exalted view of our surroundings, loving and esteeming others for what they are, and as more than they are, striving not to hold ourselves superior to them in anything, but, on the contrary, searching courageously in the depths of our own consciousness for the purpose of discovering all our faults and sins, and thus acquiring a devout humility and contempt of self—standing upon such a principle as this, the heart will feel itself full of human affection, and, instead of despising, will value highly the worth of things and of persons. Then, if afterward, Divine love should, with irresistible power, erect itself upon and tower above this foundation, there can be no fear but that such a love has its origin, not in an exaggerated self-esteem, in pride, or in an unjust contempt for our neighbor, but in a pure and holy contemplation of Infinite Beauty and Goodness.

If, as I suspect, it be Pepita Jiménez who has consulted the reverend vicar in regard to these

doubts and tribulations, I think my father can not yet flatter himself with being very dear to her; but if the vicar should resolve on giving her my advice, and she accepts it and acts upon it, then she will either become a sort of Maria de Agreda, a self-conscious recluse, or, what is more probable, she will cast away mysticism and coldness altogether, and will consent to accept, without further caviling, the hand and heart of my father, who is in no respect her inferior.

April 4th.

My life in this place begins, from its monotony, to be wearisome; and not because it is, physically, less active here than it was elsewhere; on the contrary, I walk and ride a great deal, and make excursions into the country, and, to please my father, visit the club-house and go to parties; in short, my life and my surroundings are quite uncongenial to me. For my intellectual life is a blank; I read nothing, and there is hardly a moment left me in which to reflect and meditate with tranquillity; and, as reflection and meditation were what constituted the chief charm of my existence, my life without them seems to me monotonous. Thanks to the patience which you have recommended to me for every occasion, I am able to endure it.

Another thing that prevents my spirit from being completely at rest is the longing, that becomes every day more ardent within me, to embrace that life to which I have for years been so earnestly inclined. It seems to me that, in those moments when I feel myself so near to the realization of the constant dream of my life, it is something like a profanation to allow my mind to be distracted by other objects. So much does this idea torment me, and to so many doubts does it give rise within me, that my admiration for the beauty of things cre-

ated; of the heavens, so full of stars in these serene nights of spring, and in this favored region of Andalusia; of these smiling fields, now covered with verdure; of these cool and pleasant gardens, abounding in shady and delightful walks, in gently flowing streams and rivulets, in sequestered nooks, in birds that enliven them with song, and in flowers and odorous herbs—this admiration and enthusiasm, I repeat, which formerly seemed to me in perfect harmony with the religious feeling that filled my soul, animating and exalting it, instead of weakening it, seems to me now almost a sinful distraction, and an unpardonable forgetfulness of the eternal for the temporal, of the uncreated and the spiritual for the material and created.

Although I have made but little progress in virtue, although my mind is never free from the phantasms of the imagination; although the interior man is never exempt in me from the influence of external impressions, and from the need of employing in meditation the fatiguing argumentative method; although I can not, by an effort of love, withdraw myself to the very centre of pure intelligence, to the loftiest sphere of thought, in order to behold there goodness and truth divested of images and forms; though this is all true, yet I confess to you that the method of mental prayer, unrestricted by set forms, makes me afraid. Even rational meditation inspires me with distrust. I

do not want to employ a process of reasoning in order to know God, nor to adduce arguments for loving, in order to love Him. I desire, by a single effort of the will, to elevate myself to and be absorbed in the Divine contemplation. Oh that I had the wings of a dove, to fly to the bosom of Him whom my soul loveth! But what and where are my merits? Where the mortifications, the extended prayers, and the fasting? What have I done, oh my God, that Thou shouldst favor me?

I know that the ungodly of the present day accuse—though without any foundation whatever—our holy religion of inciting souls to abhor the things of this world, to despise or to contemn Nature, perhaps to fear it also, as if there were in it something diabolical, placing all their affections on what these ungodly call the monstrous egotism of Divine love, for they say that the soul loves herself in loving God; I know, too, that this is not the case; that the Divine love is charity, and that to love God is to love all things, for all things are in God, in a supreme and ineffable manner. I know that I commit no sin in loving material things for the love of God, which is to love them for themselves, righteously; for what are material things but the manifestation, the creation, of the love of God? Yet I often feel some undefinable fear, some unwonted scruple, some vague and scarcely perceptible remorse tormenting me even at the

moment when I am experiencing an effusion of tenderness, a sort of ecstasy of enthusiasm, on penetrating into a leafy grove; on hearing the song of the nightingale, or the twittering of the swallows, or the tender cooing of the dove; on looking at the flowers; on beholding the stars.

I imagine, at times, that there is in all this something of sensual pleasure, a something that makes me forget, for the moment at least, more lofty aspirations. I do not desire that in me the spirit should sin against the flesh; but neither do I desire, on the other hand, that the beauty of the material world —that its delights, even those most delicate, subtle, and ethereal ones that are perceived rather by the spirit than by the senses, such as the soft sigh of the zephyr, laden with rural scents, the song of the birds, the peaceful and majestic silence of the night in these gardens and orchards—that these delights should distract me from the contemplation of higher beauty, or weaken, even for a moment, my love toward Him who has created this harmonious fabric of the world.

I know that all these material things are like the letters of a book, the signs and characters in which the soul, eager for knowledge, may find a hidden meaning, and decipher and discover the beauty of God, which is shadowed forth in them, though but dimly, and of which they are the pictures, or rather emblems, because they do not represent, but only

symbolize that beauty. On this distinction I dwell at times to fortify my spirit and mortify the flesh. For, I consider, if I love the beauty of earthly things for itself, it is idolatry; I ought to love this beauty as a sign and symbol of a beauty occult and divine and infinitely superior to it.

A few days ago I completed my twenty-second year. Heretofore my religious fervor has been such that I have felt no other love than the immaculate love of God Himself and of His holy religion, which I desire to diffuse and see triumphant in all the regions of the earth.

But I must needs confess that something of a profane sentiment has mingled itself with this purity of affection. You are aware of this; I have told it to you many times, and you, regarding me with your accustomed indulgence, have answered me that man is not an angel, and that even to aspire to so great a degree of perfection is pride; that I should endeavor to moderate these sentiments rather than seek to eradicate them entirely. Love of knowledge, a desire for the reputation which is founded on the possession of knowledge, even a not unfavorable opinion of one's own merits—these, even when kept within just bounds, though guarded and moderated by Christian humility, and directed toward a good end, have in them, doubtless, something of selfishness, but they may serve as a stimulus and a support to the noblest and most

constant resolutions. The scruples that trouble my conscience now, therefore, have not their source in pride, in an overweening self-confidence, in a desire for worldly fame, or in a too great love of knowledge. Nothing of this nature it is that troubles me; nothing bearing any relation to self-conceit, but, in a certain sense, something entirely opposed to it. I feel a lassitude, a debility and abandonment of the will so great that it almost makes me afraid: I am too ready to weep for tenderness when I see a little flower, or when I contemplate the ray, mysterious, slender, and swift, of a remote star.

Tell me what you think of these things; and if there be not something morbid in this disposition of my mind.

April 8th.

THE amusements of the country, in which, very much against my will, I am compelled to take part, still go on.

My father has taken me to see almost all his plantations, and he and his friends are astonished to find me not altogether ignorant in matters pertaining to the country. It would seem as if, in their eyes, the study of theology, to which I have dedicated myself, were incompatible with a familiarity with Nature. How much have they not wondered at my knowledge, on seeing me discriminate, among the vines that have only just begun to sprout, the common from the choice varieties! How much have they not wondered, too, at my being able to distinguish, among the young plants in the fields, the shoots of the barley from those of the bean; at my being familiar with many fruit and shade trees; at my knowing the names of many plants, even, that grow spontaneously in the woods, as well as something of their properties and virtues!

Pepita Jiménez, who has heard through my father of the delight I take in the gardens here, has invited me to visit one that she owns at a short distance from the village, and eat the early strawberries that grow there. This caprice of Pepita's to show so many little attentions to my father, while

at the same time she declines his addresses, seems to me at times to partake somewhat of coquetry, and to be worthy of reprobation. But whenever I see her, and find her so natural, so frank, and so simple, this bad opinion is dispelled, and I can not believe her to have any other end in view than to maintain the friendly relations that exist between her and our family.

Be this as it may, yesterday afternoon we went to Pepita's garden. It is charmingly situated, and as delightful and picturesque a place as one can imagine. The river, that by means of innumerable drains waters almost all these gardens, falls into a deep ravine, bordered on both sides by white and black poplars, willows, flowering oleanders, and other leafy trees. The waterfall, clear and transparent, precipitates itself into this ravine, sending up a cloud of spray, and then follows its tortuous course by a channel formed for it by Nature herself, enameling its banks with a thousand plants and flowers, and just now covering them with a multitude of violets. The declivity at the end of the garden is full of walnut, hazel, fig, and other fruit trees; and in the level portion are beds planted with strawberries and vegetables, tomatoes, potatoes, beans, and peppers. There is also a little flower-garden, with a great abundance of flowers, of the kinds most commonly cultivated here. Roses especially abound, and of these there are innumerable

varieties. The gardener's house is prettier and cleaner than the houses of its class that one is accustomed to see in this part of the country; and near it there is another, smaller building, dedicated to the use of the mistress of the place, where Pepita regaled us with a sumptuous collation. The pretext for this collation was the strawberries, to eat which was the chief purpose of our visit. The quantity of strawberries, considering the earliness of the season, was astonishing. They were served with the milk of goats, which belonged likewise to Pepita.

There were present at this banquet the doctor, the notary, my aunt Casilda, my father, and myself, and of course the indispensable vicar, spiritual father, and, more than spiritual father, admirer and perpetual eulogist of Pepita.

By a sort of Sybaritic refinement, it was not by the gardener, nor his wife, nor the son of the gardener, nor by any other rustic, that we were served at this banquet, but by two lovely girls, confidential servants, in a manner, of Pepita's, dressed like peasants, but with the greatest neatness and even elegance. They wore gowns of gay-colored cotton, short and confined at the waist, and around their shoulders silk handkerchiefs. Their lustrous and abundant black hair, without covering, was braided and arranged in a knot behind; and in front they wore curls confined to the head by large hairpins,

here called *caracols*. Above the knot, or *chignon*, they each displayed a bunch of fresh roses.

Pepita's attire, except that it was black and of rich material, was equally unpretending. Her merino gown, made in the same style as those of her maids, without being short, was yet not long enough to catch the dust of the ground. A modest handkerchief of black silk covered also, according to the usage of the country, her shoulders and bosom; and on her head she wore no other ornament, either flower or jewel, than that of her own blond tresses.

The only particular, with respect to Pepita, in which I observed a certain fastidiousness, and in which she departed from the customs of the country people, was in wearing gloves. It is evident that she takes great care of her hands, and is, perhaps, to a certain extent, vain of their beauty and whiteness, as well as of her rose-colored and polished nails; but if this be so, it is to be pardoned to the weakness of the flesh; and indeed, if I remember aright, I think that St. Theresa, in her youth, had this same species of vanity, which did not prevent her, however, from becoming a great saint.

In truth, I can understand, even though I do not excuse, this little piece of vanity. It is so distinguished, so aristocratic, to possess a beautiful hand! I even think, at times, that there is some-

thing symbolic in it. The hand is the instrument by which we execute our works, the sign of our nobility, the means by which the intellect gives form and shape to its artistic conceptions, by which it gives reality to the mandates of its will, by which it exercises the dominion that God conceded to man over all other creatures. The rough, strong, sinewy, horny hand—it may be, of a laborer, a workman—testifies nobly to this dominion, but on its rudest and least intellectual side. The hands of Pepita, on the contrary, transparent almost, like alabaster, but rosy-hued, and in which one can almost see the pure and subtle blood circulate that gives to the veins their faint bluish tinge—these hands, I say, with their tapering fingers and unrivaled purity of outline, seem the symbol of the magic power, the mysterious dominion, that the human spirit holds and exercises, without the intervention of material force, over all those visible things that are the creation of God by a direct act of His will, and which man, as the instrument of God, improves and completes. It would be impossible to suppose that any one with hands like Pepita's should have an impure thought, a gross desire, an unworthy purpose at variance with the purity of the hands that would be called upon to put them into effect.

It is unnecessary to say that my father appeared as much charmed with Pepita, and she as atten-

tive and affectionate toward him, as always; though her affection seemed, perhaps, of a character more filial than he could have wished. The fact is, that my father, notwithstanding the reputation he has of being in general but little respectful or reverent toward women, treats this one woman with such respect and consideration that not even Amadis, in the most devoted period of his wooing, showed greater toward Oriana. Not a single word that might shock the ear, no indelicate or inopportune compliment, no coarse jest, of the kind the Andalusians permit themselves so frequently to employ, does he ever indulge in. Hardly does he dare say to Pepita, "What beautiful eyes you have!" and, indeed, should he say so, he would only speak the truth, for Pepita's eyes are large, green as those of Circe, expressive, and well-shaped. And what enhances their beauty is that she seems unaware of all this, for there is not to be detected in her the slightest wish to please or attract any one by the sweetness of her glances.

One would say she thought eyes were only made to see with, and for no other purpose—the contrary of what I suppose to be the opinion, according to what I have heard, of the greater number of young and pretty women, who use their eyes as a weapon of offense, or as a sort of electric battery, by means of which to subdue hearts and captivate them. Not like those, indeed, are Pepita's eyes, wherein dwell

a peace and a serenity as of heaven. And yet it can not be said that there is anything of coldness in their glance. Her eyes are full of charity and sweetness. They rest with tenderness on a ray of light, on a flower, on the commonest object in Nature; but with greater tenderness still, with signs of a softer feeling, more human and benign, do they rest on her fellow man, without his daring to imagine in that tranquil and serene glance, however young or handsome or conceited he may happen to be, anything more than charity and love toward a fellow man, or, at most, a friendly preference.

I sometimes wonder if all this can be studied, and if Pepita be, in truth, an accomplished actress; but the acting would be so perfect, and so purposeless the play, that it seems to me, after all, impossible that this should be the case. Nature herself it is, then, who serves as teacher and as type for that glance and for those eyes. First, Pepita loved her mother; then circumstances led her to love Don Gumersindo through duty, as the companion of her existence; and then, doubtless, all passion that any earthly object could inspire was extinguished in her breast, and she loved God, and loved material objects for the love of God; and so arrived at last at a peaceful and even enviable condition of spirit, in which, if there be anything to censure, it is perhaps a certain vanity of which she is herself

unconscious. It is very convenient to love in this mild fashion, without allowing ourselves to be disturbed by our feelings, to have no passion to combat, to make of our love and affection for others an addition to, and, as it were, the complement of self-love.

I ask myself at times if, when I censure this state of mind in Pepita, it be not myself I censure. How do I know what passes in the soul of this woman that I should censure her? Perhaps, in thinking I behold her soul, it is my own soul that I behold. I never had, nor have I now, any passion to conquer. All my virtuous inclinations, all my instincts, good or bad, tend, thanks to your wise teachings, without obstacle or impediment, to the furtherance of the one purpose. In the fulfilment of this purpose, I should satisfy not only my noble and disinterested desires, but my selfish ones also—my love for distinction, my desire for knowledge, my curiosity to see distant lands, my longing for name and fame. All these are centred in the completing of the career upon which I have entered. I fancy at times that, in this respect, I am more worthy of censure than Pepita, supposing her even to deserve censure at all.

As regards this career, I have already begun it. I have cast out from my soul the vanities of the world; I have received the tonsure; I have consecrated myself to the service of the altar. I have a

future full of ambition before me, and I dwell with pleasure on the thought that this future is within my reach. I please myself in thinking that the conditions I possess for it are real and efficacious, though I call humility to my aid, at times, to save me from an overweening self-confidence.

To what, on the other hand, does this woman aspire, and what are her hopes? I censure her for the care she takes of her hands, for regarding her beauty, perhaps, with complacency; I almost censure her for her neatness, for the attention she bestows on her dress; for a certain indefinable coquetry there is in the very modesty and simplicity of her attire. But must virtue be slovenly? Must holiness be unclean? Can not a pure and clean soul rejoice in the cleanliness and purity of the body also? Is there not something reprehensible in the displeasure with which I regard the neatness and purity of Pepita? Is this displeasure, perchance, because she is to be my stepmother? But perhaps she does not wish to be my stepmother. Perhaps she does not love my father! It is true, indeed, that women are incomprehensible. It may be that in her secret heart she already feels inclined to return my father's affection, and marry him, though, in accordance with the saying that "what is worth much costs much," she chooses first to torment him with her affected coldness, to reduce him to unquestioning submission, to put his

constancy to the proof, and then means to end by quietly saying Yes. We shall see.

What there is no question about is, that our garden party was decorously merry. We talked of flowers, of fruit, of grafts, of planting, and of innumerable other things relating to husbandry, Pepita displaying her knowledge of agriculture in rivalry with my father, with myself, and with the reverend vicar, who listens with open mouth to every word she utters, and declares that in the seventy odd years of his life, and during his many wanderings, in the course of which he has traversed almost the whole of Andalusia, he has never known a woman more discreet or more judicious in all she thinks and says.

On returning home from any of these excursions, I renew my entreaties to my father to allow me to go back to you, in order that the wished-for moment may at last arrive in which I shall see myself elevated to the priesthood. But my father is so pleased to have me with him, he is so happy here in the village, taking care of his plantations, exercising the judicial and executive authority of squire, paying homage to Pepita, and consulting her in everything as his Egeria, that he always finds, and will find perhaps for months to come, some plausible pretext to keep me here. Now he has to clarify the wine of I know not how many casks; now he has to bottle more wine still;

now it is necessary to hoe around the vines; now to plow the olive groves and dig around the roots of the olives; in short, he keeps me here against my wishes—though I should not say "against my wishes," for it gives me great pleasure to be with my father, who is so good to me.

The evil is that, with this way of life, I fear I shall grow too material. I am conscious in my devotions of a certain aridity of spirit. My religious fervor diminishes; common life begins to penetrate, to infiltrate my nature. When I pray, I suffer distractions; in my solitary meditations, when the soul should raise itself up to God, I can no longer concentrate my thought as formerly. My sensibility of heart, on the other hand, which refuses to occupy itself with any worthy object, or employ and consume itself on its legitimate ends, wells forth, and, as it were, overflows at times for objects and under circumstances which are almost puerile, which seem to me ridiculous, and of which I am ashamed. If I awaken in the silence of the night, and hear by chance some lovelorn rustic singing, to the sound of his badly played guitar, a verse of a song, neither very original nor very poetical, nor very delicate, I am wont to be affected as if I were listening to some celestial melody.

A feeling of pity, childish, even absurd, comes over me at times. The other day the children of

my father's overseer stole a nestful of young sparrows, and on seeing the little birls, not yet fledged, torn thus violently from their tender mother, I felt a sudden pang of anguish, and I confess I could not restrain my tears. A few days before this a peasant had brought in from the fields a calf that had broken its leg. He was about to carry it to the slaughter-house, and came to ask my father what part he wished for his table. My father answered, "The head and the feet, and a few pounds of the flesh." I was touched by compassion on seeing the calf, and, but that shame prevented me, would have bought it from the man, in the hope of curing and keeping it alive. In short, my dear uncle, nothing less than the confidence I have in you would make me recount to you these signs of an extravagant and restless emotion, so that you may judge by them how necessary it is that I should return to my former way of life, to my studies, to my lofty speculations, and be at last elevated to the priesthood, in order to provide with its fit and proper aliment the fire that consumes my soul.

April 14th.

I CONTINUE to lead the same life as usual, and am detained here still by my father's entreaties.

The greatest pleasure I enjoy, after that of being with him, is my intercourse and conversation with the reverend vicar, with whom I am in the habit of taking long walks. It seems incredible that a man of his age—for he must be near eighty—should be so strong and active, and so good a walker. I grow tired sooner than he; and there is no rough road, no wild place, no rugged hill-top in the neighborhood where we have not been.

The reverend vicar is reconciling me in a great degree with the Spanish clergy, whom I have stigmatized at times, in speaking to you, as but little enlightened. How much more to be admired, I often say to myself, is this man, so full of candor and benevolence, so simple and affectionate, than one who may have read many books, but in whose soul the flame of charity, fed by the purest and sincerest faith, burns less brightly than it does in his! Do not suppose from this that the understanding of the reverend vicar is a limited one; his is a spirit uncultured, indeed, but clear and sagacious. At times I fancy that the good opinion I entertain of him may be due to the attention with which he listens to me; but if this be not the case, it seems

to me that he reasons on every subject with remarkable perspicacity, and that he knows how to unite an ardent love of our holy religion with an appreciation of all the good things that modern civilization has brought us. I am charmed, above all, by the simplicity, the sobriety, of sentiment, the naturalness, in short, with which the reverend vicar performs the most disagreeable works of charity. There is no misfortune he does not seek to alleviate, no suffering he does not strive to console, no error he does not endeavor to repair, no necessity which he does not hasten solicitously to relieve.

In all this, it must be confessed, he has a powerful auxiliary in Pepita, whose piety and compassionate disposition he is always extolling.

This species of homage which the vicar pays to Pepita is founded upon, and goes side by side with, the practise of a thousand good works—the giving of alms, prayer, public worship, and the care of the poor. Pepita not only gives alms for the poor, but also gives money for special prayers, sermons, and other observances of the Church. If the altars of the parish are gay at times with beautiful flowers, these flowers are due to the bounty of Pepita, who has sent them from her garden. If Our Lady of Sorrows, instead of her old worn cloak, wears to-day a resplendent and magnificent mantle of black velvet embroidered with silver, Pepita it is who has paid for it.

These and other similar acts of beneficence the vicar is always extolling and magnifying. Thus it is, when I am not speaking of my own aims, of my vocation, of my studies, to hear about which gives the reverend vicar great delight, and keeps him hanging upon my words, that, after a thousand turns, he always ends by speaking of Pepita Jiménez. And of whom, indeed, should the reverend vicar speak to me? His intercourse with the doctor, with the apothecary, with the rich husbandmen of the place, hardly gives ground for three words of conversation. As the reverend vicar possesses the very rare quality, in one bred in the country, of not being fond of scandal, or of meddling in other people's affairs, he has no one to speak of but Pepita, whom he visits frequently, and with whom, as may be gathered from what he says, he is in the habit of holding the most familiar colloquies.

I know not what books Pepita Jiménez has read, nor what education she may have received, but from what the reverend vicar says it may be deduced that she possesses a restless soul and an inquiring spirit, to which a multiplicity of questions and problems present themselves that she longs to elucidate and resolve, bringing them for that purpose before the reverend vicar, whom she thus puts into a state of agreeable perplexity.

This man, educated in country fashion, a priest whose breviary is, as one may say, his library, pos-

sesses an understanding open to the light of truth, but is wanting in original power, and thus the problems and questions Pepita presents to him open before him new horizons and new paths, nebulous and vague indeed, and which he did not even imagine to exist, which he is not able to follow with exactitude, but whose vagueness, novelty, and mystery enchant him.

The vicar is not ignorant of the danger of all this, and that he and Pepita expose themselves to falling, without knowing it, into some heresy; but he tranquilizes his conscience with the thought that, although very far from being a great theologian, he has his Catechism at his fingers' ends, he has confidence in God that He will illuminate his spirit, and he hopes not to be led into error, and takes it for granted that Pepita will follow his counsels, and never deviate from the right path.

Thus do both form to themselves a thousand poetical conceptions, full of charm although vague, of all the mysteries of our religion and the articles of our faith. Great is the devotion they profess to the most Holy Virgin, and I am astonished to see how they are able to blend the popular idea or conception of the Virgin with some of the sublimest theological thoughts.

From what the vicar relates I can perceive that Pepita Jiménez's soul, in the midst of its apparent calmness and serenity, is transfixed by the sharp

arrow of suffering; there is in it a love of purity in contradiction with her past life. Pepita loved Don Gumersindo as her companion, as her benefactor, as the man to whom she owed everything; but she is tortured, she is humiliated, by the recollection that Don Gumersindo was her husband.

In her devotion to the Virgin there may be detected a feeling of painful humiliation, of suffering, of sadness, produced by the recollection of her ignoble and childless marriage.

Even in her adoration of the *Infant Jesus,* in the beautiful carved image she has in her house, there is something of maternal love that lacks an object on which to expend its tenderness, of maternal love that seeks this object in a being not born of sin and impurity.

The vicar says that Pepita worships the *Infant Jesus* as her God, but that she also loves him with the maternal tenderness she would feel for a son, if she had one, and whom she had no cause to regard with any other feeling than affection. The vicar sees that Pepita, in her prayers to the Holy Virgin, and in her care of her beautiful image of the Child Jesus, has in her thoughts the ideal Mother and the ideal Son, both alike immaculate.

I confess that I know not what to think of all these singularities. I know so little of women! What the vicar tells me of Pepita surprises me; and yet, though on the whole I believe her to be

good rather than the contrary, she inspires me at times with a certain fear on my father's account. Notwithstanding his fifty-five years, I believe that he is in love; and Pepita, although virtuous through conviction, may, without premeditating or intending it, be an instrument of the spirit of evil, may practise a species of coquetry, involuntary and instinctive, more irresistible, efficacious, and fatal than that which proceeds from premeditation, calculation, and reasoning.

Who knows, I say to myself at times, notwithstanding her prayers, her secluded and devout life, her alms and her gifts to the churches—on all which is based the affection that the vicar entertains for her—if there be not also an earthly spell, if there be not something of diabolical magic in the arts she practises, and with which she deludes and beguiles this simple vicar, so that he thinks and speaks only of her on all occasions?

The very influence that Pepita exercises over a man so incredulous as my father, a man whose nature is so vigorous and so little sentimental, has in it, in truth, something extraordinary.

Nor do the good works of Pepita suffice to explain the respect and affection with which she inspires these country people in general. On the rare occasions on which she leaves the house the little children run to meet her and kiss her hand; the young girls smile, and salute her with affec-

tion; and the men take off their hats as she passes, and incline themselves before her with the most spontaneous reverence and the most natural good feeling.

Pepita Jiménez, whom many of the villagers have known since she was born, and who, to the knowledge of every one here, lived in poverty with her mother until her marriage to the decrepit and avaricious Don Gumersindo, has caused all this to be forgotten, and is now looked upon as a wondrous being, a visitant, pure and radiant, from some distant land, from some higher sphere, and is regarded by her fellow townspeople with affectionate esteem, and something like loving admiration.

I see that I am inadvertently falling into the same fault that I censure in the reverend vicar, and that I speak to you of nothing but Pepita. But this is natural. Here no one speaks of anything else. One would suppose the whole place to be full of the spirit, of the thought, of the image of this singular woman, in regard to whom I have not been able to determine if she be an angel or an accomplished coquette, full of *instinctive astuteness*, although the words may seem to involve a contradiction. For I am fully convinced in my own mind that this woman does not play the coquette, nor seek to gain the good-will of others, in order to gratify her vanity.

Pepita's soul is full of candor and sincerity. One has only to see her to be convinced of this. Her dignified and graceful bearing, her slender figure, the smoothness and clearness of her forehead, the soft and pure light of her eyes, all blend into a fitting harmony, in which there is not a single discordant note.

How deeply I regret having come to this place, and having remained here so long! I had passed my life in your house, and in the seminary; I had seen and known no one but my companions and my teachers; I knew nothing of the world but through speculation and through theory; and suddenly I find myself thrown into the midst of this world, though it be only that of a village, and distracted from my studies, meditations, and prayers by a thousand profane objects.

April 20th.

YOUR last letters, dearest uncle, have been a welcome consolation to my soul. Benevolent, as always, you admonish and enlighten me with prudent and useful reflections.

It is true my impetuosity is worthy of reprobation. I wish to attain my aims without making use of the means requisite to their attainment; I wish to reach the journey's end without first treading, step by step, the rough and thorny path.

I complain of an aridity of spirit in prayer, of inability to fix my thoughts, of a proneness to dissipate my tenderness on childish objects; I desire to elevate myself to and be absorbed in God, to attain at once to the contemplation of essential being; and yet I disdain mental prayer and rational and discursive meditation. How, without attaining to its purity, how, without beholding its light, can I hope to enjoy the delights of divine love?

I am by nature arrogant, and I shall therefore endeavor to humiliate myself in my own eyes, in order that God may not suffer the spirit of evil, in punishment of my pride and presumption, to cover me with humiliation.

I do not believe that it would be easy for me to fall into a lapse from virtue so shameful and unex-

pected as the one you fear. I do not confide in myself; I confide in the mercy of God and in His grace; and I trust they will not fail me.

Nevertheless, you are altogether right in advising me to abstain from forming ties of friendship with Pepita Jiménez; I am far enough from being bound to her by any tie.

I am not ignorant that, when those holy men and saints, who should serve us as models and examples, were bound in close intimacy and affection with women, it was in their old age, or when they were already proved and disciplined by penitence; or when there existed a noticeable disproportion in years between them and the pious women they elected to be their friends, as is related of St. Jerome and St. Paulina, and of St. John of the Cross and St. Theresa. And even thus, even with a purely spiritual affection, I know it is possible to sin through excess; for God only should occupy the soul as Lord and Spouse, and any other being who dwells in it should do so, but as the friend, the servant, the creation of the Spouse, and as one in whom the Spouse delights.

Do not think, however, that I vaunt myself on being invincible, that I despise danger, and defy and seek it. He who loves danger shall perish therein. And if the prophet-king, though so agreeable in the sight of God, and so favored of Him, and Solomon, notwithstanding his super-

natural and God-given wisdom, were troubled and fell into sin because God turned His face away from them, what have not I to fear, miserable sinner that I am, so young, so inexperienced in the wiles of the devil, and so wavering and unpractised in the combats of virtue?

Filled with a salutary fear of God, and imbued with a fitting distrust of my own weakness, I shall not be forgetful of your counsels and your prudent admonitions; and I shall pray meantime with fervor, and meditate on holy things, in order to abhor the things of the world, in so far as they deserve abhorrence; but of this I may assure you, that, however deeply I penetrate into the depths of my conscience, however carefully I search its inmost recesses, I have thus far discovered nothing to make me share your fears.

If my former letters are full of encomiums on the virtue of Pepita, it is the fault of my father and of the reverend vicar, and not mine; for at first, far from being friendly to this woman, I was unjustly prejudiced against her.

As for the beauty and physical grace of Pepita, be assured that I have contemplated them with entire purity of thought, and, though it cost me something to say it, and may cost you a little to hear it, I confess that, if any cloud has arisen to dim the clear and serene image of Pepita in the mirror of my soul, it has been owing to your harsh suspicions,

which for an instant have almost made me suspect myself.

But no; what thought have I ever entertained with regard to Pepita, what have I seen or praised in her that should lead any one to suppose me to have any other feeling for her than friendship, and the admiration, pure and innocent, that a work of art may inspire, the more especially if it be the work of the Supreme Artist, and nothing less than the temple wherein He dwells?

Besides, dear uncle, I shall have to live in the world, to hold intercourse with my fellow beings, to see them, and I can not, for that reason, pluck out my eyes. You have told me many times that you wish me to devote myself to a life of action, preaching the Divine law, and making it known in the world, rather than to a contemplative life in the midst of solitude and isolation. Well, then, this being so, how would you have me act in order to avoid seeing Pepita Jiménez? Unless I made myself ridiculous by closing my own eyes in her presence, how could I fail to notice the beauty of hers; the clearness, the roseate hue, and the purity of her complexion; the evenness and pearly whiteness of her teeth, which she discloses with frequency when she smiles; the fresh carmine of her lips, the serenity and smoothness of her brow, and a thousand other attractions with which Heaven has endowed her? It is true that for one who bears

within his soul the germ of evil thoughts, the leaven of vice, any one of the impressions that Pepita produces might be the shock of the steel against the flint, kindling the spark that would set fire to and consume all around it; but, prepared for this danger, watching against it, and guarded with the shield of Christian prudence, I do not think I have anything to fear. Besides, if it be rash to seek danger, it is cowardly not to be able to face it, and to shun it when it presents itself.

Have no fear; I see in Pepita only a beautiful creation of God, and in God I love her as a sister. If I feel any predilection for her, it is because of the praises I hear spoken of her by my father, by the reverend vicar, and by almost every one here.

For my father's sake it would please me were Pepita to relinquish her inclination for a life of seclusion, and her purpose to lead it, and to marry him. But were it not for this—were I to see that my father had only a caprice and not a genuine passion for her—then I should be glad that Pepita would remain resolute in her chaste widowhood; and when I should be far away from here—in India, or Japan, or some other yet more dangerous mission—I might find a consolation in writing to her of my wanderings and labors. Then, when I returned here in my old age it would be a great pleasure for me to be on friendly terms with her, who would also then

be aged, and to hold spiritual colloquies with her, and chats of the same sort as those the father vicar now holds with her. At present, however, as I am but a young man, I see but little of Pepita; I hardly speak to her. I prefer to be thought bashful, shy, ill-bred, and rude, rather than give any one the least occasion for thinking that I feel toward her as I ought not to, or even for suspicion or for gossip.

As for Pepita herself, not even in the most remote degree do I share the apprehension which vaguely you express. What projects could she form in respect to a man who, in two or three months more, is to be a priest! She, who has treated so many others with disdain—why should she be attracted by me? I know myself well, and I know that, fortunately, I am not capable of inspiring a passion. They say I am not ill-looking, but I am awkward, dull, shy, wanting in amiability; I bear the stamp of what I am—a humble student. What am I, compared with the gallant if somewhat rustic youths who have paid court to Pepita—agile horsemen, discreet and agreeable in conversation, Nimrods in the chase, skilled in all bodily exercises, singers of renown in all the fairs of Andalusia, and graceful and accomplished in the dance? If Pepita has scorned all these, how should she now think of me, and conceive the diabolical desire, and the more than diabolical project,

of troubling the peace of my soul, of making me abandon my vocation, perhaps of plunging me into perdition? No, it is not possible. Pepita I believe to be good, and myself—and I say it in all sincerity—insignificant; insignificant, be it understood, so far as inspiring her with love is concerned, but not too insignificant to be her friend, to merit her esteem, to be the object one day, in a certain sense, of her preference, when I shall have succeeded in making myself worthy of this preference by a holy and laborious life.

I ask you to forgive me if I have vindicated myself too warmly from certain half-expressed suspicions in your letter—suspicions that sound like accusations, or like prophetic warnings.

I do not complain of these suspicions: you have given me judicious advice, the greater part of which I accept and intend to follow; if you have gone a little beyond what is just in your suspicions, it is owing, without doubt, to the interest you take in me, and for which I am grateful to you with all my heart.

May 4th.

It is strange that in so many days I should not have had time to write to you, but such is the fact. My father does not let me rest a moment, and I am besieged by visitors.

In large cities it is easy to avoid seeing visitors, to isolate one's self, to create for one's self a solitude, a Thebaid in the midst of the tumult; in an Andalusian village, and, above all, when one has the honor of being the son of the squire, it is necessary to live in public. Not only now to my study, but even to my bedroom, do the reverend vicar, the notary, my cousin Currito, the son of Doña Casilda, and a hundred others, penetrate without any one daring to oppose them, waken me if I am asleep, and carry me off with them wherever they wish.

The clubhouse here is not a place of amusement for the evening only, but for all the hours of the day. From eleven o'clock in the morning it is full of people, who chat, glance over a paper to learn the news, and play at *ombre,* which, I have come to the conclusion, is the Spaniard's favorite game of cards; there are persons here who spend ten or twelve hours a day at it. In short, there is as much enjoyment here as one could well desire. In order that this enjoyment may be uninterrupted there

are a great many amusements. Besides *ombre,* there are many other games at cards. Draughts, chess, and dominoes are not neglected. And, finally, there is a decided passion for cock-fighting.

All this, together with making calls, going to the fields to inspect the work, settling accounts every night with the overseer, visiting the wine-vaults and cask-stores, superintending the clarifying, rebottling, and perfecting of the wines, treating with gipsies and horsedealers for the purchase, sale, or barter of horses, mules, and donkeys, or with dealers from Xeres who come to buy our wine in order to convert it into sherry, are here the daily occupation of the gentry, squirearchy, or whatever else they may choose to call themselves. On extraordinary occasions there are other tasks and amusements that give a greater appearance of animation to everything: as in harvest-time, at the vintage, and the gathering in of the olives; or when there is a fair or a bull-fight, either here or in a neighboring village; or when there is a pilgrimage to the sanctuary of some miraculous image of the Holy Virgin, where, if it be true that many go through curiosity, or to amuse themselves, and give to their sweethearts a fairing of a Cupid or a rosary, many more go through devotion, or in fulfilment of a vow or promise. One of these sanctuaries is situated at the top of a very high mountain, yet there is no lack of delicate women who,

to reach it, will climb, with bare feet wounded by the stones and brambles, the steep and rugged path that leads to it.

There is a certain charm in the life here. For one who has no desire for fame, no ambition, I can understand that it might be a very easy and agreeable life. Even solitude may be obtained by an effort. As I am here only for a short time, I can neither make this effort, nor ought I to do so; but if I were settled here, I should find no difficulty in secluding myself—and that, too, without offending any one—for several hours, or for the whole day, if it were necessary, in order to devote myself to my studies and meditations.

Your last letter has troubled me a little. I see that you persist in your suspicions, and I know not what answer to make in order to justify myself but the answer I have already made you.

You say that the victory, in a certain kind of warfare, consists in flight; that to fly is to conquer. Why should I seek to deny what the Apostle and so many holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church have said? But you well know that, in this case, flight does not depend upon me. My father is resolved that I shall not go; he keeps me here against my will, and I must obey him. The victory must be gained by other means, then, than by flight.

To set your mind at rest, I repeat that matters

have not gone so far as you think; that you see them in a much more advanced stage than they really are.

There is not the slightest sign that Pepita Jiménez loves me. And even did she love me, it would be in a different way from that in which these women loved whom you cite as a salutary warning to me. A lady of our times, virtuous and well brought up, is neither so susceptible nor so wanting in decorum as those matrons of whose adventures ancient history is full.

The passage you cite from St. John Chrysostom is indeed worthy of consideration; but it is not altogether applicable to the circumstances. The great lady who in On, Thebes, or Diospolis Magna, fell in love with the favorite son of Jacob, was in all probability extremely handsome. By such a supposition only can one comprehend the words of the saint, that it was a greater miracle that Joseph should have passed through this ordeal unscathed, than that the three young men whom Nebuchadnezzar caused to be placed in the fiery furnace were not reduced to ashes!

As far as beauty is concerned, I confess frankly that I can not think that the wife of the Egyptian prince, chamberlain of the palace of the Pharaohs, or whatever else may have been his title, was in any degree superior to Pepita Jiménez. But neither am I endowed with as many gifts and ex-

cellences as was Joseph, nor is Pepita a woman without religion and without decorum. And even were the circumstances such as he relates, were all those horrors true, I can only account for the exaggerated language of St. John Chrysostom by the fact that he lived in the corrupt capital, half Gentile still, of the Lower Empire, in the midst of that Court whose vices he so harshly censures, and where the Empress Eudoxia herself gave an example of scandal and corruption.

But in our day, when the morality taught in the Gospel has penetrated more deeply into the strata of society, it seems to me an exaggeration to think the chaste scorn of the son of Jacob any more miraculous than the material incombustibility of the three young men of Babylon.

There is one point on which you touch in your letter that encourages and pleases me greatly. You condemn, as is right, the exaggerated sentimentality, and the tendency to be easily moved and to weep from childish motives, from which I told you that I suffered at times; but since this disposition of soul, so necessary to combat, exists in me, you rejoice that it does not affect my prayers and meditations and contaminate them. You recognize and praise in me the virile energy that should animate the passions and the mind that seek to elevate themselves to God.

The intelligence that strives to comprehend Him

must be a vigorous one; the will that submits itself entirely to Him must first have triumphed, fighting bravely against every appetite, and defeating and putting to flight every temptation over self. The very passion which, purified and ardent, has power, even in weak and miserable mortals, to exalt itself, by an ecstasy of love, to God Himself, attaining by a supernatural illumination to the knowledge of Him, is the offspring of a steadfast and upright character, as well as of the Divine grace. This languor, this debility of the will, this morbid tenderness have nothing in them in common with charity, with piety, or with Divine love. The former are the attributes of a nature less than feminine; the latter are passions, if passions they can be called, of angels rather than of men. God will be my surety, and with His help I will fight for my own salvation. But should I sink into perdition, not in disguise nor by capitulation shall the enemies of the soul and the sins of the flesh enter into the fortress of my conscience, but with banners flying, laying waste everything before them by fire and sword, and after a desperate conflict.

In the past few days I have had occasion to practise patience in an extreme degree, and to mortify my self-love in the most cruel manner. My father, wishing to return Pepita's compliment of the garden-party, invited her to visit his villa at the Pozo de la Solana. The excursion took place

on the 22d of April. I shall not soon forget the date.

The Pozo de la Solana is about two leagues distant from the village, and the only road to it is a bridle-path. We all had to go on horseback. As I never learned to ride, I had on former occasions accompanied my father mounted on a pacing mule, gentle, and, according to the expression of Dientes the muleteer, as good as gold, and of easier motion than a carriage. On the journey to the Pozo de la Solana I went in the same manner.

My father, the notary, the apothecary, and my cousin Currito were mounted on good horses. My aunt, Doña Casilda, who weighs more than two hundred and fifty pounds, rode on a large and powerful donkey, seated in a commodious side-saddle. The reverend vicar rode a gentle and easy mule like mine.

As for Pepita Jiménez, who, I supposed, would go also mounted on a donkey, in the same sort of easy saddle as my aunt—for I was ignorant that she knew how to ride—she surprised me by making her appearance on a black and white horse full of fire and spirit. She wore a riding-habit, and managed her horse with admirable grace and skill.

I was pleased to see Pepita look so charming on horseback, but I soon began to foresee and to be mortified by the sorry part I would play, jogging on in the rear beside my corpulent aunt Casilda

and the vicar, all three as quiet and tranquil as if we were seated in a carriage, while the gay cavalcade in front would caracole, gallop, trot, and make a thousand other displays of their horsemanship.

I fancied on the instant that there was something of compassion in Pepita's glance as she noted the pitiable appearance I no doubt presented, seated on my mule. My cousin Currito looked at me with a mocking smile, and immediately began to make fun of me and to tease me.

Confess that I deserve credit for my resignation and courage. I submitted to everything with a good grace, and Currito's jests soon ceased when he saw that I was invulnerable to them. But what did I not suffer in secret! The others, now trotting, now galloping, rode in advance of us, both in going and returning. The vicar and I, with Doña Casilda between us, rode on, tranquil as the mules we were seated upon, without hastening or retarding our pace.

I had not even the consolation of chatting with the vicar, in whose conversation I find so much pleasure, nor of wrapping myself up in my own thoughts and giving the rein to my fancy, nor of silently admiring the beauty of the scenery around us. Doña Casilda is gifted with an abominable loquacity, and we were obliged to listen to her. She told us all there is to be told of the gossip of the village; she recounted to us all her accomplish-

ments; she told us how to make sausages, brain-puddings, pastry, and innumerable other dishes and delicacies. There is no one, according to herself, who can rival her in matters pertaining to the kitchen, or to the dressing of hogs, but Antoñona, Pepita's nurse, and now her housekeeper and general manager. I am already acquainted with this Antoñona, for she goes back and forth between her mistress's house and ours with messages, and is in truth extremely handy—as loquacious as Aunt Casilda, but a great deal more discreet.

The scenery on the road to the Pozo de la Solana is charming, but my mind was so disturbed during our journey that I could not enjoy it. When we arrived at the villa and dismounted, I was relieved of a great load, as if it had been I who carried the mule, and not the mule who carried me.

We then proceeded on foot through the estate, which is magnificent, of varied character and extensive. There are vines, old and newly planted, all on the same property, producing more than five hundred bushels of grapes; olive trees that yield to the same amount; and, finally, a grove of the most majestic oaks that are to be found in all Andalusia. The water of the Pozo de la Solana forms a clear and deep brook, at which all the birds of the neighborhood come to drink, and on whose borders they are caught by hundreds, by means of reeds smeared with bird-lime, or of nets, in the

centre of which are fastened a cord and a decoy. All this carried my thoughts back to the sports of my childhood, and to the many times that I too had gone to catch birds in the same manner.

Following the course of the brook, and especially in the ravines, are many poplars and other tall trees, which, together with the bushes and the shrubs, form a dark and labyrinthine wood. A thousand fragrant wild flowers grow there spontaneously, and it would, in truth, be difficult to imagine anything more secluded and sylvan, more solitary, peaceful, and silent than this spot. Even in the fervor of noonday, when the sun pours down his light in torrents from a heaven without a cloud, the mind experiences the same mysterious terror as visits it at times in the silent hours of the night. One can understand here the manner of life of the patriarchs of old, and of the primitive shepherds and heroes; and the visions and apparitions that appeared to them of nymphs, of gods, and of angels, in the midst of the noonday brightness.

As we walked through this thicket, there arrived a moment in which, I know not how, Pepita and I found ourselves alone together. The others had remained behind.

I felt a sudden thrill pass through me. For the first time, and in a place so solitary, I found myself alone with this woman; while my thoughts were still dwelling on the noontide apparitions,

now sinister, now gracious, but always supernatural, vouchsafed to the men of remote ages.

Pepita had left the long skirt of her riding-habit in the house, and now wore a short dress that did not interfere with the graceful ease of her movements. She had on her head a little Andalusian hat, which became her extremely. She carried in her hand her riding-whip, which I fancied to myself to be a magic wand by means of which this enchantress might cast her spells over me.

I am not afraid to transcribe here these eulogies of her beauty. In this sylvan scene she appeared to me more beautiful than ever. The precaution recommended in similar cases by ascetics, to think of her beauty defaced by sickness and old age, to picture her to myself dead, the prey of corruption and of the worm, presented itself, against my will, to my imagination; and I say *against my will*, for I do not concur in the necessity for such a precaution. No thought of the material, no suggestion of the evil spirit, troubled my reason or infected my will or my senses.

What did occur to me was an argument—at least to my mind—in disproof of the efficacy of this precaution. Beauty, the creation of a Sovereign and Divine Power, may indeed be frail and ephemeral, may vanish in an instant; but the idea of beauty is eternal, and, once perceived by the mind, it lives there an immortal life. The beauty of this

woman, such as it manifests itself to-day, will disappear in a few short years; the graceful form, those charming contours, the noble head that raises itself so proudly above her shoulders: all will be food for loathsome worms; but—though the material must of necessity be transformed—its idea, the creative thought—abstract beauty, in a word—what shall destroy this? Does it not exist in the Divine Mind? Once perceived and known by me, must it not continue to live in my soul, triumphing over age and even over death?

I was meditating thus, striving to tranquilize my spirit and to dissipate the doubts which you have succeeded in infusing into my mind, when Pepita and I encountered each other. I was pleased and at the same time troubled to find myself alone with her—hoping and yet fearing that the others would join us.

The silvery voice of Pepita broke the silence, and drew me from my meditations, saying:

"How silent you are, Don Luis, and how sad! I am pained to think that it is perhaps through my fault, or partly so at least, that your father has caused you to spend a disagreeable day in these solitudes, taking you away from a solitude more congenial, where there would be nothing to distract your attention from your prayers and pious books."

I know not what answer I made to this. It must

have been something nonsensical, for my mind was troubled. I did not wish to flatter Pepita by paying her profane compliments, nor, on the other hand, did I wish to answer her rudely.

She continued:

"You must forgive me if I am wrong, but I fancy that, in addition to the annoyance of seeing yourself deprived to-day of your favorite occupation, there is something else that powerfully contributes to your ill-humor."

"And what is this something else?" I said; "since you have discovered it, or fancy you have done so."

"This something else," responded Pepita, "is a feeling not altogether becoming in one who is going to be a priest so soon, but very natural in a young man of twenty-two."

On hearing this I felt the blood mount to my face, and my face burn. I imagined a thousand absurdities; I thought myself beset by evil spirits; I fancied myself tempted by Pepita, who was doubtless about to let me understand that she knew I loved her. Then my timidity gave place to haughtiness, and I looked her steadily in the face. There must have been something laughable in my look, but either Pepita did not observe it, or, if she did, she concealed the fact with amiable discretion; for she exclaimed, in the most natural manner:

"Do not be offended because I find you are not without fault. This that I have observed seems to me a slight one. You are hurt by the jests of Currito, and by being compelled to play—speaking profanely—a not very dignified part, mounted, like the reverend vicar with his eighty years, on a placid mule, and not, as a youth of your age and condition should be, on a spirited horse. The fault is the reverend dean's, to whom it did not occur that you should learn to ride. To know how to manage a horse is not opposed to the career you intend to follow, and I think, now that you are here, that your father might in a few days give you the necessary instruction to enable you to do so. If you should go to Persia or to China, where there are no railroads yet, you will make but a sorry figure in those countries as a bad horseman. It is possible even that, by this oversight, the missionary himself may come to lose prestige in the eyes of those barbarians, which will make it all the more difficult for him to reap the fruits of his labors."

This and other arguments Pepita adduced in order to persuade me to learn to ride on horseback; and I was so convinced of the necessity of a missionary's being a good horseman that I promised her to learn at once, taking my father as a teacher.

"On the very next expedition we make," I said, "I shall ride the most spirited horse my father has, instead of the mule I am riding to-day."

"I shall be very glad if you do," responded Pepita, with a smile of indescribable sweetness.

At this moment we were joined by the rest of the party, at which I was secretly rejoiced, though for no other reason than the fear of not being able to sustain the conversation, and of saying a great many foolish things, on account of the little experience I have had in conversing with women.

After our walk my father's servants spread before us on the fresh grass, in the most charming spot beside the brook, a rural and abundant collation.

The conversation was very animated, and Pepita acquitted herself with much discretion and intelligence. My cousin Currito returned to his jests about my manner of riding and the meekness of my mule. He called me a theologian, and said that, seated on muleback, I looked as if I were dispensing blessings. This time, however, being now firmly resolved to learn to ride, I answered his jests with sarcastic indifference. I was silent, nevertheless, with respect to the promise I had just made Pepita. The latter, doubtless thinking as I did—although we had come to no understanding in the matter—that silence for the present was necessary to ensure the complete success of the surprise that I would create afterward by my knowledge of horsemanship, said nothing of our conversation. Thus it happened, naturally and in the simplest

manner, that a secret existed between us; and it produced in my mind a singular effect.

Nothing else worth telling occurred during the day.

In the afternoon we returned to the village in the same manner in which we had left it. Yet, seated on my easy-going mule and at the side of my aunt Casilda, I did not experience the same fatigue or sadness as before.

During the whole journey I listened without weariness to my aunt's stories, amusing myself at times in conjuring up idle fancies. Nothing of what passes in my soul shall be concealed from you. I confess, then, that the figure of Pepita was, as it were, the centre, or rather the nucleus and focus, of these idle fancies.

The noonday vision in which she had appeared to me, in the shadiest and most sequestered part of the grove, brought to my memory all the visions, holy and unholy, of wondrous beings, of a condition superior to ours, that I had read of in sacred authors and in the profane classics. Pepita appeared to the eyes and on the stage of my fancy in the leafy seclusion of the grove, not as she rode before us on horseback, but in an ideal and ethereal fashion—as Venus to Æneas, as Minerva to Callimachus, as the sylph who afterward became the mother of Libusa to the Bohemian Kroco, as Diana to the son of Aristæus, as the angels in the valley

of Mamre to the Patriarch, as the hippocentaur to St. Anthony in the solitude of the wilderness.

That the vision of Pepita should assume in my mind something of a supernatural character seems to me no more to be wondered at than any of these. For an instant, seeing the consistency of the illusion, I thought myself tempted by evil spirits; but I reflected that in the few moments during which I had been alone with Pepita near the brook of the Solana, nothing had occurred that was not natural and commonplace; that it was afterward, as I rode along quietly on my mule, that some demon, hovering invisible around me, had suggested these extravagant fancies.

That night I told my father of my desire to learn to ride. I did not wish to conceal from him that it was Pepita who had suggested this desire. My father was greatly rejoiced; he embraced me, he kissed me, he said that now not you only would be my teacher, but that he also would have the pleasure of teaching me something. He ended by assuring me that in two or three weeks he would make me the best horseman of all Andalusia; able to go to Gibraltar for contraband goods, and come back laden with tobacco and cotton, after eluding the vigilance of the Custom-house officers; fit, in a word, to astonish the riders who show off their horsemanship in the fairs of Seville and Mairena, and worthy to press the flanks of Babieca, Buce-

phalus, or even of the horses of the sun themselves, if they should by chance descend to earth, and I could catch them by the bridle.

I don't know what you will think of this notion of my learning to ride, but I take it for granted you will see nothing wrong in it.

If you could but see how happy my father is, and how he delights in teaching me! Since the day after the excursion I told you of, I take two lessons daily. There are days on which the lesson is continuous, for we are on horseback from morning till night. During the first week the lessons took place in the courtyard of the house, which is unpaved, and which served us as a riding-school.

We now ride out into the country, but manage so that no one shall see us. My father does not want me to show myself on horseback in public until I am able to astonish every one by my fine appearance in the saddle, as he says. If the vanity natural to a father does not deceive him, this, it seems, will be very soon, for I have a wonderful aptitude for riding.

"It is easy to see that you are my son!" my father exclaims with joy, as he watches my progress.

My father is so good that I hope you will pardon him the profane language and irreverent jests in which he indulges at times. I grieve for this at the bottom of my soul, but I endure it with patience. These constant and long-continued lessons have re-

duced me to a pitiable condition with blisters. My father enjoins me to write to you that they are caused by mortification of the flesh.

As he declares that within a few weeks I shall be an accomplished horseman, and he does not desire to be superannuated as a master, he proposes to teach me other accomplishments of a somewhat irregular character, and sufficiently unsuited to a future priest. At times he proposes to train me in bull-fighting, in order that he may take me afterward to Seville, where, with lance in hand, on the plains of Tablada, I shall make the braggarts and the bullies stare. Then he recalls his own youthful days, when he belonged to the bodyguard, and declares that he will look up his foils, gloves, and masks, and teach me to fence. And, finally, as my father flatters himself that he can wield the Sevillian dagger better than any one else, he has offered to teach me even this accomplishment also.

You can already imagine the answer I make to all this nonsense. My father replies that, in the good old times, not only the priests, but even the bishops themselves, rode about the country on horseback, putting infidels to the sword. I rejoin that this might happen in the Dark Ages, but that in our day the ministers of the Most High should know of no other weapons than those of persuasion.

"And what if persuasion be not enough?" says

my father. "Do you think it would be amiss to reenforce argument with a few good blows of a cudgel?"

The complete missionary, according to my father's opinion, should know how, on occasion, to take recourse to these heroic measures, and as my father has read a great many tales and romances, he quotes various examples in support of his opinion.

He cites, in the first place, St. James, who on his white horse, without ceasing to be an apostle, put more Moors to the sword than he preached to or convinced. He cites a certain Señor de la Vera, who, being sent on an embassy to Boabdil by Ferdinand and Isabella, became entangled in a theological discussion with the Moors in the Court of the Lions, and, having exhausted his arguments, drew his sword and fell upon them with fury in order to complete their conversion. And he finally cites the Biscayan nobleman, Ignatius Loyola, who, in a controversy he had with a Moor regarding the purity of the Holy Virgin, growing weary at last of the impious and horrible blasphemies with which the aforesaid Moor contradicted him, fell upon him, sword in hand, and, if he had not taken to his heels, would have forced conviction upon his soul in a terrible fashion. In regard to the incident relating to St. Ignatius, I answer my father that this was before the saint became a priest; and

in regard to the other examples, I answer that historians are not agreed.

In short, I defend myself as best I can against my father's jests, and I content myself with being a good horseman, without learning other accomplishments unsuited to the clergy, although my father assures me that not a few of the Spanish clergy understand and practise them with frequency in Spain, even in our own day, with a view to contributing to the triumph of the faith, and to the preservation or the restoration of the unity of the Church.

I am grieved to the soul by this levity of my father's, and that he should speak with irreverence and jestingly about the most serious things; but a respectful son is not called upon to go further than I do in repressing his somewhat Voltairean freedom of speech. I say *Voltairean*, because I am not able to describe it by any other word. At heart my father is a good Catholic, and this thought consoles me.

Yesterday was the Feast of the Cross, and the village presented a very animated appearance. In each street were six or seven May-crosses covered with flowers, but none of them was so beautiful as that placed by Pepita at the door of her house. It was adorned by a perfect cascade of flowers.

In the evening we went to an entertainment at the house of Pepita. The cross which had stood

at the door was now placed in a large saloon on the ground floor, in which there is a piano, and Pepita presented us with a simple and poetic spectacle—one that I had seen when a child, but had since forgotten.

From the upper part of the cross hung down seven bands or broad ribbons, two white, two green, and three red, the symbolic colors of the theological virtues. Small children, five or six years old, representing the seven sacraments, and holding the seven ribbons that hung from the cross, performed with great skill a species of contra-dance. The sacrament of baptism was represented by a child wearing the white robe of a catechumen; ordination, by another child as a priest; confirmation, by a little bishop; extreme unction, by a pilgrim with staff and scrip, the latter filled with shells; marriage, by a bride and bridegroom; and penance, by a Nazarene with cross and crown of thorns.

The dance was a series of reverences, steps, evolutions, and genuflexions, rather than a dance, performed to the sound of very tolerable music, something like a march, which the organist played, not without skill, on the piano.

The little dancers, children of the servants or retainers of Pepita, after playing their parts, went away to bed loaded with gifts and caresses.

The entertainment, in the course of which we

were served with refreshments, continued till twelve; the refreshments were syrup served in little cups, and afterward chocolate with sponge-cake, and meringues and sugared water.

Since the return of spring Pepita's seclusion and retirement are being gradually abandoned, at which my father is greatly rejoiced. In future Pepita will receive every night, and my father desires that I shall be one of the guests.

Pepita has left off mourning, and now appears, more lovely and attractive than ever, in the lighter fabrics appropriate to the season, which is almost summer. She still dresses, however, with extreme simplicity.

I cherish the hope that my father will not now detain me here beyond the end of this month at farthest. In June we shall both join you in the city, and you shall then see how, far from Pepita, to whom I am indifferent, and who will remember me neither kindly nor unkindly, I shall have the pleasure of embracing you, and attaining at last to the happiness of being ordained.

May 7th.

PEPITA, as I mentioned to you before, receives every evening, from nine to twelve.

Four or five married ladies of the village, and as many more unmarried ones, including Aunt Casilda, are frequent visitors; as well as six or seven young men, who play at forfeits with the girls. Three or four engagements are the natural result.

The sedate portion of the company are the same as usual. These are, as one may say, the high functionaries of the village—my father, who is the squire, the apothecary, the doctor, and the vicar.

Pepita plays *ombre* with my father and the vicar and a fourth player.

I am at a loss to know in which division to place myself. If I join the young people, my gravity proves a hindrance to their games and flirtations; if I stay with the elders, I must play the part of a looker-on in things I have no knowledge of. The only games of cards I know are simple and old-fashioned, and do not seem to be in vogue here, in polite society.

The best course for me to pursue would be to absent myself from the house altogether, but my father will not hear of this. By doing so, according to him, I should make myself ridiculous.

My father shows many signs of wonder when he sees my ignorance in certain things. That I should not know how to play even *ombre* fills him with astonishment.

"Your uncle has brought you up quite out of the world," he says to me, "cramming you with theology, and leaving you in the dark about everything else you ought to know. For the very reason that you are to be a priest, and can neither dance nor make love in society, it is necessary that you should know how to play *ombre*. Otherwise how are you going to spend your time, unhappy boy?"

To these and other arguments of a like kind I have been obliged to yield, and my father is teaching me at home to play *ombre*, so that, as soon as I have learned it, I may play it at Pepita's. He wanted also, as I already told you, to teach me to fence, and afterward to smoke and shoot and throw the bar; but I have consented to nothing of all this.

"What a difference," my father exclaims, "between your youth and mine!"

And then he adds, laughing:

"In substance it is the same thing. I, too, had canonical hours in my regimental quarters: a cigar was the censer; a pack of cards, the hymn-book; and there were never wanting other devotions and exercises of a more or less spiritual character."

Although you had warned me of my father's levity of disposition, on account of which I have

lived with you for twelve years of my life—from the age of ten to that of twenty-two—yet his sayings, altogether too free at times, perturb and mortify me. But what is to be done? Although I can not reprove him for making use of them, I do not, on the other hand, applaud or laugh at them. The strangest part of it is, that my father is altogether another person when he is in the house of Pepita. Never, even by chance, does he utter a single phrase, a single jest of the kind he is so prodigal of at other times. At Pepita's my father is propriety itself. He seems, too, to become every day more attached to her, and to cherish greater hopes of success.

My father continues greatly pleased with me as his pupil in horsemanship. He declares that in four or five days I shall have mastered the art, and that I shall then mount Lucero, a black horse bred from an Arab horse and a mare of the race of Guadalcazar, full of fire and spirit, and trained to all manner of curvetings.

"Whoever succeeds in getting on the back of Lucero," my father says to me, "may venture to compete in horsemanship with the centaurs themselves; and that you shall do very soon."

Although I spend the whole day out of doors on horseback, in the clubhouse, or at Pepita's, I yet steal a few hours from slumber, sometimes voluntarily, sometimes because I can not sleep, to medi-

tate on my situation and to examine my conscience. The image of Pepita is always present to my mind. "Can this be love?" I ask myself.

The moral obligation I am under, the vow I have made to consecrate myself to the service of the altar, although not confirmed, is nevertheless in my eyes full and binding. If anything opposed to the fulfilment of this vow has entered into my soul, it must be combated.

I note, too—and you must not accuse me of arrogance because I mention this to you—that the empire of my will, which you have taught me to exercise, is complete over my senses. While Moses on the top of Mount Sinai conversed with God, the rebellious people on the plain below adored the golden calf. Notwithstanding my youth, my spirit has no fears of falling into a like rebelliousness. I might commune with God in full security, if the enemy did not come to attack me in the sanctuary itself. But the image of Pepita presents itself to my soul. It is a spirit that makes war against my spirit. It is the idea of her beauty, in all its spiritual purity, that stands before the sanctuary of the soul, where God resides, and prevents me from reaching Him.

I do not shut my eyes to the truth, however; I can see clearly; I can reason; I do not deceive myself.

Above and beyond this spiritual inclination that

draws me to Pepita, is the love of the Infinite and of the Eternal. Although I represent Pepita to myself as an idea, as a poem, it is still the idea, the poetry of something finite, limited, concrete; while the love of God and the conception of God embrace everything. But notwithstanding all my efforts, I am unable to give form in my mind to this supreme conception—this object of the highest love—in order that it may combat the image, the memory of the frail and ephemeral reality that continually besets me.

Fervently do I implore Heaven to awaken within me the power of the imagination, that it may create a likeness, a symbol of this conception, that shall be all-embracing, and absorb and efface the image of Pepita. This highest conception, on which I desire to centre my love, is vague, shadowy, indescribable, like the blackness of darkness; while Pepita's image presents itself to me in clearly defined outlines, bright, palpable, luminous with the subdued light that may be borne by the eyes of the spirit, not bright with the intense light that for the eyes of the spirit is as darkness.

Every other consideration, every other object, is of no avail to destroy her image. It rises up between the crucifix and me; between the most sacred image of the Virgin and me; I see it on the page of the religious book I am reading.

Yet I do not believe that my soul is invaded by

what in the world is called love. And even if this were so, I would do battle against this love, and conquer in the end.

The daily sight of Pepita, the hearing her praises sounded continually, even by the reverend vicar, preoccupy me; they turn my spirit toward profane things, and withdraw it from its proper meditations. But no—I do not yet love Pepita; I will go away from here and forget her.

While I remain here I will battle valiantly. I will wrestle with the Lord in order to prevail with Him by love and submission. My cries shall reach Him like burning arrows, and shall break down the buckler wherewith He defends and hides Himself from the eyes of my soul. I will fight like Israel in the silence of the night and the Lord shall wound me in the thigh, and shall humble me in the conflict, in order that, being vanquished, I may become the victor.

May 12th.

BEFORE I had any intention of doing so, my dear uncle, my father persuaded me to ride Lucero. Yesterday, at six in the morning, I mounted the beautiful wild beast, as my father calls Lucero, and we set out for the country. My father rode a spirited chestnut.

I rode so well, I kept so firm a seat, and looked to such advantage on the superb animal, that my father could not resist the temptation of showing off his pupil; and about eleven in the morning, after resting at a farm he owns half a league distant from here, he insisted on our returning to the village and entering by the most frequented street, which we did, our horses' hoofs clattering loudly on the paving stones. It is needless to say that we rode by Pepita's house, who for some time past is to be seen occasionally at her window, and who was then seated at the grating of a lower window, behind the green shutter.

Hardly had Pepita heard the noise we made than, lifting up her eyes and seeing us, she rose, laid down the sewing she had in her hands, and set herself to observe us. Lucero, who has the habit, as I learned afterward, of prancing and curveting when he passes the house of Pepita, began to show off, and to rear and plunge. I tried to quiet him,

but as there was something unfamiliar to him in the ways of his present rider, as well as in the rider himself, whom perhaps he regarded with contempt, he grew more and more unmanageable, and began to neigh and prance, and even to kick. But I remained firm and serene, showing him that I was his master, chastizing him with the spur, touching his breast with the whip, and holding him in by the bridle. Lucero, who had almost stood up on his hind legs, now humbled himself so far as to bend his knees gently and make a reverence.

The crowd of idlers who had gathered around us broke into boisterous applause. My father called out to them:

"A good lesson that for our braggarts and blusterers!"

And, observing afterward that Currito—who has no other occupation than to amuse himself—was among the crowd, he addressed him in these words:

"Look at that, you rascal! Look at the theologian now, and see if you don't stare with wonder, instead of laughing at him!"

And, in fact, there Currito stood open-mouthed, stock-still with amazement, and unable to utter a word.

My triumph was great and assured, although unsuited to my character. The unfitness of the triumph covered me with confusion. Shame brought the blood to my cheeks. I must have turned as red

as scarlet, or redder, when I saw that Pepita was applauding and saluting me graciously, while she smiled and clapped her beautiful hands.

In short, I have been adjudged a man of nerve and a horseman of the first rank.

My father could not be prouder or happier than he is. He declares that he is completing my education; that in me you have sent him a book full of wisdom, but uncorrected and unbound, and that he is now making a fair copy, and putting it between covers.

On two occasions I played *ombre* with Pepita. Learning *ombre,* if that be a part of the binding and the correcting, is also done with.

The night after my equestrian feat Pepita received me with enthusiasm, and—what she had never done before, nor perhaps desired to do—gave me her hand.

Do not suppose that I did not call to mind what so many moralists and ascetics recommend in like cases, but in my inmost thoughts I believed they exaggerated the danger. Those words of the Holy Spirit, that it is as dangerous to touch a woman as a scorpion, seem to me to have been said in another sense. In pious books, no doubt, many phrases and sentences of the Scriptures are, with the best intentions, interpreted harshly. How are we to understand otherwise the saying that the beauty of woman, this perfect work of God, is always the

cause of perdition? Or how are we to understand, in a universal and invariable sense, that woman is more bitter than death? How are we to understand that he who touches a woman, on whatever occasion or with whatsoever thought, shall not escape without stain?

However, I made answer rapidly within my own mind to these and other similar counsels; I took the hand that Pepita kindly extended to me, and pressed it in mine. Its softness made me comprehend all the better the delicacy and beauty of the hand that until now I had known only by sight.

According to the usages of the world, the hand, once given, should always be given on entering a room and on taking leave. I hope that in this ceremony, in this evidence of friendship, in this manifestation of kindness, given and accepted in purity of heart, and without any mixture of levity, you will see nothing either evil or dangerous.

As my father is often obliged of an evening to see the overseer and others of the country people, and is seldom free until half-past ten or eleven, I take his place with Pepita at the card-table. The reverend vicar and the notary are generally the other partners, and we play for very small stakes, so that not more than a piastre or two changes hands.

As the game thus possesses but little serious interest, we interrupt it constantly with pleasant con-

versation, and even with discussions on matters foreign to the game itself, in all which Pepita displays such clearness of understanding, such liveliness of imagination, and such extraordinary grace of expression as to astonish me.

I find no sufficient motive to change my opinion with respect to what I have already said in answer to your suspicions that Pepita perhaps feels a certain liking for me. She manifests toward me the affection she would naturally entertain for the son of her suitor, Don Pedro de Vargas, and the timidity and shyness that would be inspired by a man in my position, who, though not yet a priest, is soon to become one.

Nevertheless, as I always speak to you in my letters as if I were kneeling before you in the confessional, I desire, as is my duty, to communicate to you a passing impression I have received on two or three occasions. This impression may be but a hallucination or a delusion, but I have none the less felt it.

I have already told you in my former letters that the eyes of Pepita, green as those of Circe, are frank and tranquil in their gaze; she does not seem to be conscious of their power, or to know that they serve for any other purpose than to see with. When she looks at one, the soft light of her glance is so clear, so candid, and so untroubled that, instead of giving rise to any evil thoughts, it seems

to give birth to pure thoughts, and leaves innocent and chaste souls in untroubled repose, while it destroys every incitement to evil in souls that are not chaste. There is no trace of ardent passion, no fire to be discovered in Pepita's eyes. Their light is like the mild ray of the moon.

Well, then, notwithstanding all this, I fancied I detected, on two or three occasions, a sudden brightness, a gleam as of lightning, a swift, devouring flame in her eyes as they rested on me. Can this be the result of a ridiculous vanity, inspired by the arch fiend himself?

I think so. I believe it is, and I wish to believe it.

The swiftness, the fugitive nature of the impression make me conjecture that it had no external reality, that it was only an illusion.

The serenity of heaven, the coldness of indifference, tempered, indeed, with sweetness and charity —this is what I always discern in Pepita's eyes.

Nevertheless, this illusion, this vision of a strange and ardent glance, torments me.

My father affirms that in affairs of the heart it is the woman, not the man, who takes the first step; but that she takes it without thereby incurring any responsibility, and with the power to disavow or retract it whenever she desires to do so. According to my father, it is the woman who first declares her passion through the medium of furtive glances,

which she afterward disavows to her own conscience if necessary, and of which he to whom they are directed divines, rather than reads, the significance. In this manner, by a species of electric shock, by means of a subtle and inexplicable intuition, he who is loved perceives that he is loved; and when at last he makes up his mind to declare himself, he can do so confidently, and in the full security that his passion is returned.

Perhaps it is these theories of my father, to which I have listened because I could not help it, that have heated my fancy and made me imagine what has no existence in reality.

Yet, after all, I say to myself at times, Is the thought so absurd, so incredible, that this illusion should have an existence in reality? And if it had, if I were pleasing in Pepita's eyes otherwise than as a friend, if the woman to whom my father is paying his addresses should fall in love with me, would not my position then be terrible?

But let us cast away these fears, the creation, no doubt, of vanity. Let us not make a Phædra of Pepita, or a Hippolytus of me.

What in reality begins to surprise me is my father's carelessness and complete consciousness of security. Pardon my pride, ask Heaven to pardon it; for at times this consciousness of security piques and offends me. What! I say to myself, is there something so absurd in the thought that it should

not even occur to my father that, notwithstanding my supposed sanctity, or perhaps because of my supposed sanctity, I should, without wishing it, inspire Pepita with love?

There is an ingenious method of reasoning by which I explain to myself, without wounding my vanity, my father's carelessness in this important particular. My father, although he has no reason for doing so, regards himself already in the light of Pepita's husband, and shares that fatal blindness with which Asmodeus, or some other yet more malicious demon, afflicts husbands. Profane and ecclesiastical history is full of instances of this blindness, which God permits, no doubt, for providential purposes. The most remarkable example of it, perhaps, is that of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, who had for his wife a woman so vile as Faustina, and though so wise a man and so great a philosopher, remained in ignorance to the end of his days of what was known to every one else in the Roman Empire; so that in the meditations, or memoirs, that he composed, he gives infinite thanks to the immortal gods for having bestowed upon him so faithful and so good a wife, thus provoking the smiles of his contemporaries and of future generations. Every day since that time we see examples of great men, and men of exalted rank, who make those who enjoy the favor of their wives their private secretaries, and bestow honors on

them. Thus do I explain to myself my father's indifference, and his failure to suspect that, even against my will, I might become his rival.

Would it be a want of respect on my part, should I fall into the sin of presumption or insolence, if I were to warn my father of the danger which he himself does not see? But he gives me no opportunity to say anything to him. Besides, what could I say to him? That once or twice I fancy Pepita has looked at me in a way different from that in which she usually does? May not this be an illusion of mine? No; I have not the least proof that Pepita desires to play the coquette with me.

What, then, could I tell my father? Shall I say to him that it is I who am in love with Pepita, that I covet the treasure he already regards as his own? This is not the truth; and, above all, how could I tell this to my father, even if, to my misfortune and through my fault, it were the truth?

The best course I can adopt is to say nothing; to combat the temptation in silence, if it should indeed assail me, and to endeavor as soon as possible to leave this place and return to you.

May 19th.

I RETURN thanks to Heaven and to you for the letters and the counsels you have lately sent me. To-day I need them more than ever.

The mystical and learned St. Theresa is right in dwelling upon the suffering of timid souls that allow themselves to be disturbed by temptation; but a thousand times worse than that suffering is the awakening from error of those who, like me, have permitted themselves to indulge in arrogance and self-confidence.

Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit; but when fire is set to the walls of the temple, though they do not burn, yet they are blackened.

The first evil thought is the head of the serpent; if we do not crush it with firm and courageous foot, then will the venomous reptile climb up and hide himself in our bosom.

The nectar of earthly joys, however innocent they be, is sweet indeed to the taste; but afterward it is converted into gall, and into the venom of the serpent.

It is true—I can no longer deny it to you—I ought not to have allowed my eyes to rest with so much complacency on this dangerous woman.

I do not deem myself lost; but I feel my soul troubled.

Even as the thirsty hart desires and seeks the water-brooks, so does my soul still seek God. To God does it turn that He may give it rest; it longs to drink at the torrent of His delights, whose gushing waters rejoice Paradise, and whose clear waves can wash us whiter than snow; but deep calleth unto deep, and my feet have stuck fast in the mire that is hidden in their abysses.

Yet have I still breath and voice to cry out with the psalmist: "Arise, my joy! If thou art on my side, who shall prevail against me?"

I say unto my sinful soul, full of the chimerical imaginings and sinful desires engendered by unlawful thoughts: "Oh, miserable daughter of Babylon! happy shall he be who shall give thee thy reward! Happy shall he be that dasheth thy little ones against the stones!"

Works of penance, fasting, prayer, and penance, are the weapons wherewith I shall arm myself to the combat, and, with the Divine help, to vanquish.

It was not a dream; it was not madness; it was the truth: she lets her eyes rest upon me at times with the ardent glance of which I have told you. There is in her glance an inexplicable magnetic attraction. It draws me on, it seduces me, and I can not withdraw my gaze from her. On such occasions my eyes must burn, like hers, with a fatal flame, as did those of Ammon when he turned them

upon Tamar, as did those of the prince of Shechem when they were fixed upon Dinah.

When our glances thus meet, I forget even God. Her image rises up within my soul, the conqueror of everything. Her beauty outshines all other beauty; the joys of heaven seem to me less desirable than her affection. An eternity of suffering would be little in exchange for a moment of the infinite bliss with which one of those glances which pass like lightning inundates my soul.

When I return home, when I am alone in my room, in the silence of the night, I realize all the horror of my position, and I form good resolutions, only to break them again.

I resolve to feign sickness, to make use of any pretext so as not to go to Pepita's on the following night, and yet I go.

My father, confiding to the last degree, says to me when the hour arrives, without any suspicion of what is passing in my soul:

"Go to Pepita's; I will go later, when I have finished with the overseer."

No excuse occurs to me; I can find no pretext for not going, and instead of answering, "I can not go," I take my hat and depart.

On entering the room I shake hands with Pepita, and as our hands touch she casts a spell over me; my whole being is changed; a devouring fire penetrates my heart, and I think only of her. Moved

by an irresistible impulse, I gaze at her with insane ardor, and at every instant I think I discover in her new perfections. Now it is the dimples in her cheeks when she smiles, now the roseate whiteness of her skin, now the straight outline of her nose, now the smallness of her ear, now the softness of contour and the admirable modeling of her throat.

I enter her house against my will, as though summoned there by a conjuror, and no sooner am I there than I fall under the spell of her enchantment. I see clearly that I am in the power of an enchantress whose fascination is irresistible.

Not only is she pleasing to my sight, but her words sound in my ears like the music of the spheres, revealing to my soul the harmony of the universe; and I even fancy that a subtle fragrance emanates from her, sweeter than the perfume of the mint that grows by the brookside, or the wood-like odor of the thyme that is found among the hills.

I know not how, in this state of exaltation, I am able to play *ombre*, or to converse rationally, or even to speak, so completely am I absorbed in her.

When our eyes meet, our souls rush forth in them and seem to join and interpenetrate each other. In that meeting a thousand feelings are communicated that in no other way could be made known; poems

are recited that could be uttered in no human tongue, and songs are sung that no human voice could sing, and no guitar accompany.

Since the day I met Pepita by the Pozo de la Solana I have not seen her alone. Not a word has passed between us, yet we have told each other everything.

When I withdraw myself from this fascination, when I am again alone at night in my chamber, I set myself to examine coolly the situation in which I am placed; I see the abyss that is about to engulf me yawning before me; I feel my feet slip from under me, and that I am sinking into it.

You counsel me to reflect upon death—not on the death of this woman, but on my own. You counsel me to reflect on the instability, on the insecurity of our existence, and on what there is beyond it. But these considerations, these reflections neither terrify nor daunt me. Why should I, who desire to die, fear death? Love and death are brothers. A sentiment of self-abnegation springs to life within me, and tells me that my whole being should be consecrated to and annihilated in the beloved object. I long to merge myself in one of her glances; to diffuse and exhale my whole being in the ray of light shot forth from her eyes; to die while gazing on her, even though I should be eternally lost.

What is still to some extent efficacious with me

against this love is not fear, but love itself. Superior to this deep-rooted love with which I now have the evidence that Pepita inspires me, Divine love exalts itself in my spirit in mighty uprising. Then everything is changed within me, and I feel that I may yet obtain the victory. The object of my higher love presents itself to my mental vision, as the sun that kindles and illuminates all things, and fills all space with light; and the object of my inferior love appears but as an atom of dust floating in the sunbeam. All her beauty, all her splendor, all her attractions are nothing but the reflection of this uncreated sun, the brilliant, transitory, fleeting spark that is cast off from that infinite and inexhaustible fire.

My soul, burning with love, would fain take to itself wings and rise to that flame, in order that all that is impure within it might be consumed therein.

My life, for some days past, is a constant struggle. I know not how it is that the malady from which I suffer does not betray itself in my countenance. I scarcely eat, I scarcely sleep; and if by chance sleep closes my eyelids, I awake in terror, as from a dream in which rebel angels are arrayed against good angels, and in which I am one of the combatants. In this conflict of light against darkness I do battle for the right, but I sometimes imagine that I have gone over to the enemy, that I

am a vile deserter; and I hear a voice from Patmos saying, "And men loved darkness rather than light"; and then I am filled with terror, and I look upon myself as lost.

No resource is left me but flight. If, before the end of the month, my father does not go with me, or consent to my going alone, I shall steal away like a thief, without a word to any one.

May 23d.

I AM a vile worm, not a man; I am the opprobrium and disgrace of humanity. I am a hypocrite.

I have been encompassed by the pangs of death, and the waters of iniquity have passed over me.

I am ashamed to write to you, and yet I write. I desire to confess everything to you.

I can not turn away from evil. Far from abstaining from going to Pepita's, I go there each night earlier than the last. It would seem as if devils took me by the feet and carried me there against my will!

Happily, I never find Pepita alone; I do not desire to find her alone. I almost always find the excellent vicar there before me, who attributes our friendship to similarity of feeling in religious matters, and bases it on piety, like the pure and innocent friendship he himself entertains for her.

The progress of my malady is rapid. Like the stone that is loosened from the mountain-top and gathers force as it falls, so is it with my spirit.

When Pepita and I shake hands, it is not now as at first. Each one of us, by an effort of the will, transmits to the other, through the handclasp, every throb of the heart. It is as if, by some diabolical

art, we had effected a transfusion and a blending together of the most subtle elements of our blood. She must feel my life circulate through her veins, as I feel hers in mine.

When I am near her, I love her; when I am away from her, I hate her. When I am in her presence she inspires me with love; she draws me to her; she subjugates me with gentleness; she lays upon me a very easy yoke.

But the recollection of her undoes me. When I dream of her, I dream that she is severing my head from my body, as Judith slew the captain of the Assyrians; or that she is driving a nail into my temple, as Jael did to Sisera. But when I am near her, she appears to me the Spouse of the Song of Songs, and a voice within me calls to her and I bless her, and I regard her as a sealed fountain, as an enclosed garden, as the flower of the valley, as the lily of the fields, my dove and my sister.

I desire to free myself from her, and I can not. I abhor, yet I almost worship her. Her spirit enters into me and takes possession of me as soon as I behold her; it subjugates me, it abases me.

I leave her house each night, saying, "This is the last night I shall return here"; and I return there on the following night!

When she speaks, and I am near, my soul hangs, as it were, upon her words. When she smiles, I

imagine that a ray of spiritual light enters into my heart and rejoices it.

It has happened, when playing *ombre*, that our knees have touched by chance, and then I have felt a thrill run through me impossible to describe.

Get me away from this place. Write to my father and ask him to let me return to you. If it be necessary, tell him everything. Help me! Be my refuge!

May 30th.

GOD has given me strength to resist, and I have resisted.

It is now many days since I have been in the house of Pepita, many days since I have seen her.

It is scarcely necessary that I should feign sickness, for I am in reality sick. I have lost my color, and dark circles begin to show themselves under my eyes; and my father asks me, full of affectionate anxiety, what the cause of my suffering is, and manifests the deepest concern.

The kingdom of Heaven is said to yield to violence, and I am resolved to conquer it. With violence I call at its gates that they may open to me.

With wormwood am I fed by the Lord, in order to prove me; and in vain do I supplicate Him to let this cup of bitterness pass away from me. But, as I have passed and still pass many nights in vigil, delivered up to prayer, a loving inspiration from the Supreme Consoler has come to sweeten the bitterness of my cup.

I have beheld with the eyes of the soul the new country; and the new song of the heavenly Jerusalem has resounded within the depths of my heart.

If in the end I should conquer, glorious will be

the victory; but I shall owe it to the Queen of Angels, under whose protection I place myself. She is my refuge and my defense; the tower of the house of David, on whose walls hang innumerable shields and the armor of many valiant champions; the cedar of Lebanon, which puts the serpent to flight.

The woman who inspires me with an earthly love, on the contrary, I endeavor to despise and abase in my thoughts, remembering the words of the sage, and applying them to her.

"Thou art the snare of the hunter," I say of her; "thy heart is a net of deceit, and thy hands are bands that imprison; he who fears God will flee from thee, and the sinner shall be taken captive by thee."

In my meditations on love I find a thousand reasons for loving God, and against loving her.

I feel, in the depths of my heart, an indescribable enthusiasm that convinces me that for the love of God I would sacrifice all things—fame, honor, power, dominion. I feel myself capable of imitating Christ, and if the Tempter should carry me off to the mountain-top, and should there offer me all the kingdoms of the earth if I consented to bow the knee before him, yet would I not bend it. But were he to offer me this woman if I should do so, I feel that I should waver, that I could not reject his offer. Is this woman, then, worth more in my

eyes than all the kingdoms of the earth? More than fame, honor, power, and dominion?

Is the virtue of love, I ask myself at times, always the same, even when applied to divers objects? Or are there two species and qualities of love? To love God seems to me to be the giving up of self and selfish interest. Loving Him, I desire to love, and I can love, all things through Him, and I am not troubled or jealous because of His love toward all things. I am not jealous of the saints, or of the martyrs, or of the blessed, or even of the seraphim. The greater I picture to myself to be the love of God for His creatures, and the graces and gifts He bestows upon them, the less am I troubled by jealousy; the more I love Him, the nearer to me do I feel Him to be, and the more loving and gracious does He seem toward me. My brotherhood, my more than brotherhood, with all creatures, stands forth then in a most pleasing light. It seems to me that I am one with all things, and that all things are bound together in the bonds of love, through God and in God.

Very different is it when my thoughts dwell upon Pepita, and on the love with which she inspires me. This love is a love full of hatred, that separates me from everything but myself. I love her for myself, altogether for myself, and myself altogether for her. Even devotion to her, even sacrifices made for her sake, partake of the nature

of selfishness. To die for her would be to die of despair at not being able to possess her in any other manner—from the fear of not enjoying her love completely, except by dying and commingling with her in an eternal embrace.

By these reflections I endeavor to render the love of Pepita hateful to me. I invest my love in my imagination with something diabolical and fatal; but, as if I possessed a double soul, a double understanding, a double will, and a double imagination, in contradiction to this thought, other feelings rise up within me in its train, and I then deny what I have just affirmed, and insanely endeavor to reconcile the two loves. Would it not be possible, I ask myself, to fly from Pepita, and yet continue to love her, without ceasing therefore to consecrate myself with fervor to the love of God? For, as the love of God does not exclude love of country, love of humanity, love of learning, love of beauty in Nature and in Art, neither should it exclude another love, if it be spiritual and immaculate. I will make of her, I say to myself, a symbol, an allegory, an image of all that is good, of all that is beautiful. She shall be to me, as Beatrice was to Dante, the image and the symbol of country, of knowledge, and of beauty.

This intention suggests to me a horrible fancy, a monstrous thought. In order to make of Pepita this symbol, this vaporous and ethereal image, this

sign and epitome of all that I can love under God, in God, and subordinate to God, I picture her to myself dead, as Beatrice was dead when Dante made her the subject of his song.

If I picture her to myself among the living, then I am unable to convert her into a pure idea; and if I convert her into a pure idea, I kill her in my thoughts.

Then I weep; I am filled with horror at my crime, and I draw near to her in spirit, and with the warmth of my heart I bring her back to life again; and I behold her, not errant, diaphanous, floating in shadowy outline among roseate clouds and celestial flowers, as the stern Ghibelline beheld his beloved in the upper sphere of Purgatory; but coherent, solid, clearly defined in the pure and serene air, like the masterpieces of Greek art, like Galatea already animated by the love of Pygmalion, and descending from her pedestal of marble, full of fire, exhaling love, rich in youth and beauty.

Then I exclaim in the depths of my perturbed heart: "My virtue faints! My God, do not Thou forsake me! Hasten to my help; show Thy countenance, and I shall be saved!"

Thus do I recover strength to resist temptation. Thus again does the hope spring to life within me, that I shall regain my former tranquillity when I shall have left this place.

The Devil longs with ardor to swallow up the

pure waters of Jordan, by which are symbolized the persons who are consecrated to God. Hell conspires against them, and lets loose all her monsters upon them. St. Bonaventure says: "We should not wonder that these persons have sinned, but rather that they have not sinned."

Notwithstanding, I shall be able to resist and not sin. The Lord will protect me.

June 6th.

PEPITA'S nurse—now her housekeeper—is, as my father says, a good bag of wrinkles; she is talkative, gay, and skilful, as few are. She married the son of Master Cencias, and has inherited from the father what the son did not inherit—a wonderful facility for the mechanical arts, with this difference: that while Master Cencias could set the screw of a wine-press, or repair the wheels of a wagon, or make a plow, this daughter-in-law of his knows how to make sweetmeats, conserves of honey, and other dainties. The father-in-law practised the useful arts; the daughter-in-law those that have for their object pleasure, though only innocent, or at least lawful pleasure.

Antoñona—for such is her name—is permitted, or assumes, the greatest familiarity with all the gentry here. She goes in and out of every house as if it were her own. She uses the familiar "thou" to all young people of Pepita's age, or four or five years older; she calls them "child," and treats them as if she had nursed them at her breast.

She behaves toward me in this way; she comes to visit me, enters my room unannounced, has asked me several times already why I no longer go to see her mistress, and has told me that I am wrong in not going.

My father, who has no suspicion of the truth, accuses me of eccentricity; he calls me an owl, and he, too, is determined that I shall resume my visits to Pepita. Last night I could no longer resist his repeated importunities, and I went to her house very early, as my father was about to settle his accounts with the overseer.

Would to God I had not gone!

Pepita was alone. When our glances met, when we saluted each other, we both turned red. We shook hands with timidity and in silence.

I did not press her hand, nor did she press mine, but for a moment we held them clasped together.

In Pepita's glance, as she looked at me, there was nothing of love; there was only friendship, sympathy, and a profound sadness.

She had divined the whole of my inward struggle; she was persuaded that Divine love had triumphed in my soul—that my resolution not to love her was firm and invincible.

She did not venture to complain of me; she had no reason to complain of me; she knew that right was on my side. A sigh, scarcely perceptible, that escaped from her dewy, parted lips, revealed to me the depth of her sorrow.

Her hand still lay in mine; we were both silent. How was I to tell her that she was not destined for me, nor I for her; that we must part forever?

But though my lips refused to tell her this in

words, I told it to her with my eyes; my severe glance confirmed her fears; it convinced her of the irrevocableness of my decision.

All at once her gaze was troubled; her lovely countenance, pale with a translucent pallor, was full of a touching expression of melancholy. She looked like Our Lady of Sorrows. Two tears rose slowly to her eyes, and began to steal down her cheeks.

I know not what passed within me, nor how to describe it, even if I knew.

I bent toward her to kiss away her tears and our lips met.

Rapture unspeakable, a faintness full of peril, invaded us both. She would have fallen, but that I supported her in my arms.

Heaven willed that we should at this moment hear the step and the cough of the reverend vicar, who was approaching, and we instantly drew apart.

Recovering myself, and summoning all the strength of my will, I brought to an end this terrible scene, that had been enacted in silence, with these words, which I pronounced in low and intense accents:

"The first and the last!"

I made allusion to our profane kiss; but, as if my words had been an invocation, there rose before me the vision of the Apocalypse in all its terrible majesty. I beheld Him who is indeed the First and

the Last, and with the two-edged sword that proceeded from His mouth He pierced my soul, full of evil, of wickedness, and of sin.

All that evening I passed in a species of frenzy, an inward delirium, that I know not how I was able to conceal.

I withdrew from Pepita's house very early.

The anguish of my soul was yet more poignant in solitude.

When I recalled that kiss and those words of farewell, I compared myself with the traitor Judas, who made use of a kiss to betray; and with the sanguinary and treacherous assassin Joab, who plunged the sharp steel into the bowels of Amasa while in the act of kissing him.

I had committed a double treason; I had been guilty of a double perfidy. I had sinned against God and against her.

I am an execrable wretch.

June 11th.

EVERYTHING may still be remedied.

Pepita will in time forget her love and the weakness of which we were guilty.

Since that night I have not returned to her house. Antoñono has not made her appearance in ours.

By dint of entreaties I have obtained a formal promise from my father that we shall leave here on the 25th, the day after St. John's day, which is here celebrated with splendid feasts, and on the eve of which there is a great vigil.

Absent from Pepita, I begin to recover my serenity and to think that this first beginning of love was a trial of my virtue.

All these nights I have prayed, I have watched, I have performed many acts of penance.

The persistence of my prayers, the deep contrition of my soul, have found favor with the Lord, who has manifested to me His great mercy.

The Lord, in the words of the prophet, has sent fire to the stronghold of my spirit; He has illuminated my understanding, He has kindled my resolution, and He has given me guidance.

The working of the Divine love which animates the Supreme Will has had power, at times, without my deserving it, to lead me to that condition of

prayerful contemplation in which the soul enjoys repose. I have cast out from the lower faculties of my soul every image—even her image; and I am persuaded, if pride does not deceive me, that, in perfect peace of mind and heart I have known and enjoyed the Supreme Good that dwells within the depths of the soul.

Compared with this good all else is worthless—compared with this beauty all else is deformity—compared with these heights all else is vile. Who would not forget and scorn every other love for the love of God?

Yes; the profane image of this woman shall depart finally and forever from my soul. I shall make of my prayers and of my penance a sharp scourge, and with it I will expel her therefrom, as Christ expelled the money-lenders from the Temple.

June 18th.

THIS is the last letter I shall write to you. On the 25th I shall leave this place without fail.

I shall soon have the happiness of embracing you. Near you I shall be stronger. You will infuse courage into me, and lend me the energy in which I am wanting.

A tempest of conflicting emotions is now raging in my soul. The disorder of my ideas may be known by the disorder of what I write.

Twice I returned to the house of Pepita. I was cold and stern. I was as I ought to have been, but how much did it not cost me!

My father told me yesterday that Pepita was indisposed, and would not receive.

The thought at once assailed me that the cause of her indisposition might be her ill-requited love.

Why did I return her glances of fire? Why did I basely deceive her? Why did I make her believe I loved her? Why did my vile lips seek hers with ardor, and communicate the ardor of an unholy love to hers?

But no; my sin shall not be followed, as its unavoidable consequence, by another sin!

What has been, has been, and can not be undone; but a repetition of it may be avoided—shall be avoided in future.

On the 25th, I repeat, I shall depart from here without fail.

The impudent Antoñona has just come to see me. I hid this letter from her, as if it were a crime to write to you.

Antoñona remained here only for a moment.

I arose, and remained standing while I spoke to her, that the visit might be a short one.

During this short visit she gave utterance to a thousand mad speeches, which disturbed me greatly. Finally, as she was going away, she exclaimed, in her half-gipsy jargon:

"You deceiver! You villain! My curse upon you! You have made the child sick, and now you are killing her by your desertion. May witches fly away with you, body and bones!"

Having said this, the fiendish woman gave me, in a coarse vulgar fashion, six or seven ferocious pinches below the shoulders, as if she would like to tear the skin from my back in strips, and then went away, looking daggers at me.

I do not complain. I deserve this brutal jest, granting it to be a jest. I deserve that fiends should tear my flesh with red-hot pincers.

Grant, my God, that Pepita may forget me! Let her, if it be necessary, love another, and be happy with him!

Can I ask more than this of Thee, oh, my God?

My father knows nothing, suspects nothing. It is better thus.

Farewell for a few days, till we see and embrace each other again.

How changed will you find me! How full of bitterness my heart! How soiled my purity! How bruised and wounded my soul!

PART II

PARALIPOMENA

HERE end the letters of Don Luis de Vargas. We should therefore be left in ignorance of the subsequent fortunes of these lovers, if one familiar with all the circumstances had not communicated the following particulars:

No one in the village found anything strange in the fact of Pepita's being indisposed, or thought, still less, of attributing her indisposition to a cause of which only we, Pepita herself, Don Luis, the reverend dean, and the discreet Antoñona, are thus far cognizant.

They might rather have wondered at the life of gaiety that Pepita had been leading for some time past, at the daily gatherings at her house, and the excursions into the country in which she had joined. That Pepita should return to her habitual seclusion was quite natural.

Her secret and deeply rooted love for Don Luis was hidden from the searching glances of Doña Casilda, of Currito, and of all the other personages of the village of whom mention is made in the

letters of Don Luis. Still less could the public know of it. It never entered into the head of any one, no one imagined for a moment, that the theologian, the "saint," as they called Don Luis, could become the rival of his father, or could have succeeded where the redoubtable and powerful Don Pedro de Vargas had failed—in winning the heart of the graceful, coy, and reserved young widow.

Notwithstanding the familiarity of the ladies of the village with their servants, Pepita had allowed none of hers to suspect anything. Only the lynx-eyed Antoñona, whom nothing could escape, and more especially nothing that concerned her young mistress, had penetrated the mystery.

Antoñona did not conceal her discovery from Pepita, nor could Pepita deny the truth to the woman who had nursed her, who idolized her, and who, if she delighted in finding out and gossiping about all that took place in the village, being, as she was, a model scandal-monger, was yet, in all that related to her mistress, reticent and loyal as but few are.

In this manner Antoñona made herself the confidante of Pepita; and Pepita found great consolation in unburdening her heart to one who, though she might be coarse in the frankness with which she expressed her sentiments, was not so either in the sentiments or the ideas that she expressed.

In this may be found the explanation of An-

toñona's visits to Don Luis, as well as of her words, and even of the ferocious and disrespectful pinches, given in so ill-chosen a spot, with which she bruised his flesh and wounded his dignity on the occasion of her last visit to him.

Not only had Pepita not desired Antoñona to carry messages to Don Luis, but she did not even know that she had gone to see him. Antoñona had taken the initiative, and had interfered in the matter simply because she herself had wanted to do so.

As has already been said, she had with wonderful perspicacity discovered the state of affairs between her mistress and Don Luis.

While Pepita herself was still scarcely conscious of the fact that she loved Don Luis, Antoñona already knew it. Scarcely had Pepita begun to cast on him those furtive glances, ardent and involuntary, which had wrought such havoc—glances which had been intercepted by none of those present when they were given—when Antoñona, who was not present, had already spoken of them to Pepita. And no sooner had those glances been returned, than Antoñona knew that also.

There was but little left, then, for the mistress to confide to a servant of so much penetration, and so skilled in divining what passed in the inmost recesses of her breast.

Five days after the date of Don Luis's last letter our narrative begins:

Pepita Jimenez

I

It was eleven o'clock in the morning. Pepita was in an apartment on an upper floor, contiguous to her bedroom and dressing-room, where no one ever entered without being summoned, save Antoñona.

The furniture of this apartment was simple, but comfortable and in good taste. The curtains and the covering of the easy-chairs, the sofas, and the armchairs, were of a flowered cotton fabric. On a mahogany table were writing materials and papers, and in a bookcase, also of mahogany, were many books of devotion and history. The walls were adorned with pictures—engravings of religious subjects, but with this peculiarity in their selection—unheard-of, extraordinary, almost incredible in an Andalusian village—that, instead of being bad French lithographs, they were engravings in the best style of Spanish art, as the *Spasimo di Sicilia* of *Raffael;* the *St. Ildefonso* and the *Virgin,* the *Conception,* the *St. Bernard,* and the two *Lunettes* of Murillo.

On an antique oak table, supported by fluted columns, was a small writing-desk, or escritoire, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, ivory, and brass, and containing a great many little drawers, in which

Pepita kept bills and other papers. On this table were also two porcelain vases filled with flowers; and, finally, hanging against the walls were several flower-pots of Seville Carthusian ware, containing ivy, geraniums, and other plants, and three gilded cages, in which were canaries and larks.

This apartment was the retreat of Pepita, where no one entered during the daytime except the doctor and the reverend vicar; and in the evening only the overseer, to settle accounts. This apartment was called the study, and served the purpose of one.

Pepita was seated, half reclining on a sofa, before which stood a small table with some books upon it.

She had just risen, and was attired in a light summer wrapper. Her blond hair, not yet arranged, looked even more beautiful in its disorder. Her countenance, somewhat pale, and showing dark circles under the eyes, still preserved its fresh and youthful aspect, and looked more beautiful than ever under the influence of the trouble which robbed it of color.

Pepita showed signs of impatience; she was expecting some one.

At last the person she was awaiting, who proved to be the reverend vicar, arrived, and entered without announcement.

After the usual salutations the vicar settled him-

self comfortably in an easy-chair, and the conversation thus began:

"I am very glad, my child, that you sent for me; but, even without your doing so, I was just coming to see you. How pale you are! What is it that ails you? Have you anything of importance to tell me?"

Pepita began her answer to this series of affectionate inquiries with a deep sigh; she then said:

"Do you not divine my malady? Have you not discovered the cause of my suffering?"

The vicar made a gesture of denial, and looked at Pepita with something like terror in his gaze; for he knew nothing of all that had taken place, and was struck by the vehemence with which she spoke.

Pepita continued:

"I ought not to have sent for you, father. I should have gone to the church myself instead, to speak with you in the confessional, and there confess my sins. But, unhappily, far from repenting of them, my heart has hardened itself in wickedness. I have neither the courage nor the desire to speak to the confessor, but only to the friend."

"What are you saying about sins and hardness of heart? Have you taken leave of your senses? What sins can you have committed, you who are so good?"

"No, father, I am wicked. I have been deceiv-

ing you; I have been deceiving myself; I have tried to deceive God."

"Come, come, calm yourself; speak with moderation and common sense, and don't talk foolishly."

"And how shall I avoid talking foolishly when the spirit of evil possesses me?"

"Holy Virgin! Don't talk nonsense, child; the demons most to be feared who take possession of the soul are three, and none of them, I am certain, can have dared to enter into yours. One is Leviathan, or the spirit of Pride; the other is Mammon, or the spirit of Avarice; and the other is Asmodeus, or the spirit of Unholy Love."

"Well, I am the victim of all three; all three hold dominion over me."

"This is dreadful! Calm yourself, I repeat. The real trouble with you is that you are delirious."

"Would to God it were so! The contrary, unhappily for me, is the case. I am avaricious, because I possess riches, and do not perform the works of charity I ought to perform; I am proud, because I scorn the addresses of my many suitors, not through virtue, not through modesty, but because I thought them unworthy of my love. God has punished me; God has permitted the third enemy you have named to take possession of me."

"How is this, child? What diabolical notion

has entered into your mind! Have you by chance fallen in love? And, if you have, what harm is there in that? Are you not free? Get married, then, and stop talking nonsense. I am certain it is my friend Don Pedro de Vargas who has wrought the miracle. That same Don Pedro is the very Devil! I confess I am surprised. I did not think matters had gone quite so far as that already."

"But it is not Don Pedro de Vargas that I am in love with."

"And with whom, then?"

Pepita rose from her seat, went to the door, opened it, looked to see if any one was listening outside, drew near to the reverend vicar, and with signs of the deepest distress, in a trembling voice and with tears in her eyes, said, almost in the ear of the good old man:

"I am hopelessly in love with his son."

"With whose son?" cried the reverend vicar, who could not yet bring himself to believe what he had heard.

"With whose son should it be? I am hopelessly, desperately in love with Don Luis."

Consternation and dolorous surprise were depicted on the countenance of the kind and simple priest. There was a moment's pause; the vicar then said:

"But this is love without hope; a love not to be thought of. Don Luis will never love you."

A joyful light sparkled through the tears that clouded Pepita's beautiful eyes: her rosy, dewy lips, contracted by sorrow, parted in a smile, disclosing to view her pearly teeth.

"He loves me," said Pepita, with a faint and ill-concealed accent of satisfaction and triumph, which rose exultant over her sorrow and her scruples of conscience.

The consternation and astonishment of the reverend vicar here reached their highest pitch. If the saint of his most fervent devotions had been suddenly cast down from the altar before him, and had fallen, broken into a thousand fragments, at his feet, the reverend vicar could not have felt greater consternation. He still looked at Pepita with incredulity, as if doubting whether what she had said were true, or only a delusion of feminine vanity, so firmly did he believe in the holiness and mysticism of Don Luis.

"He loves me," Pepita repeated, in answer to his incredulous glance.

"Women are worse than the very Devil!" said the vicar. "You would set a snare for old Nick himself."

"Did I not tell you already that I was very wicked?"

"Come, come! calm yourself. The mercy of God is infinite. Tell me all that has happened."

"What should have happened? That he is dear

to me; that I love him; that I adore him; that he loves me, too, although he strives to conquer his love, and in the end may succeed in doing so; and that you, without knowing it, are very much to blame for it all!"

"Well, this is too much! What do you mean by saying I am very much to blame?"

"With the extreme goodness which is characteristic of you, you have done nothing but praise Don Luis to me; and I am sure that you have pronounced still greater eulogies on me to him, although very much less deserved. What is the natural consequence? Am I of bronze? Have I not the passions of youth?"

"You are more than right; I am a dolt. I have contributed, in great part, to this work of Lucifer."

The reverend vicar was so truly good, and so full of humility, that, while pronouncing the preceding words, he showed as much confusion and remorse as if he were the culprit and Pepita the judge.

Pepita, conscious of her injustice and want of generosity in thus making the reverend vicar the accomplice, and scarcely less than the chief author of her fault, spoke to him thus:

"Don't torment yourself, father; for God's sake, don't torment yourself! You see now how perverse I am. I commit the greatest sins, and I want to throw the responsibility of them on the best and the most virtuous of men. It is not the praises you

have recited to me of Don Luis that have been my ruin, but my own eyes, and my want of circumspection. Even though you had never spoken to me of the good qualities of Don Luis, I should still have discovered them all by hearing him speak; for after all, I am not so ignorant, nor so great a fool. And in any case, I myself have seen the grace of his person, the natural and untaught elegance of his manners, his eyes full of fire and intelligence—his whole self, in a word, which seems to me altogether amiable and desirable. Your eulogies of him have indeed pleased my vanity, but they did not awaken my inclinations. Your praises charmed me because they coincided with my own opinion, and were like the flattering echo—deadened, indeed, and faint—of my thoughts. The most eloquent encomium you have pronounced in my hearing on Don Luis was far from being equal to the encomiums that I, at each moment, at each instant, silently pronounced upon him in my own soul."

"Don't excite yourself, child," interrupted the reverend vicar.

Pepita continued, with still greater exaltation:

"But what a difference between your encomiums and my thoughts! For you, Don Luis was the exemplary model of the priest, the missionary, the apostle; now preaching the Gospel in distant lands, now endeavoring in Spain to elevate Christianity,

so degraded in our day through the impiety of some, and the want of virtue, of charity, and of knowledge of others. I, on the contrary, pictured him to myself, handsome, loving, forgetting God for me, consecrating his life to me, giving me his soul, becoming my stay, my support, my sweet companion. I longed to commit a sacrilegious theft: I dreamed of stealing him from God and from His temple, like a thief, the enemy of Heaven, who robs the sacred monstrance of its most precious jewel. To commit such a theft I have put off the mourning garments of the widow and orphan, and have decked myself with profane adornments; I have abandoned my seclusion; I have sought company and gathered it around me; I have tried to make myself look beautiful; I have cared for every part of this miserable body, that must one day be lowered into the grave and be converted into dust, with an unholy devotion; and finally, I have looked at Don Luis with provoking glances, and on shaking hands with him I have sought to transmit from my veins to his the inextinguishable fire that is consuming me."

"Alas! my child, what grief it gives me to hear this! Who could have imagined it?" said the vicar.

"But there is still more," resumed Pepita. "I succeeded in making Don Luis love me. He declared it to me with his eyes. Yes, his love is as profound, as ardent as mine. His virtues, his aspi-

rations toward heavenly things, his manly energy, have all urged him to conquer this insensate passion. I sought to prevent this. Once, at the end of many days during which he had stayed away, he came to see me, and found me alone. When he gave me his hand, I wept; I could not speak; but hell inspired me with an accursed, mute eloquence that told him of my grief that he had scorned me, that he did not return my love, that he preferred another love—a love without stain—to mine. Then he was unable to resist the temptation, and he approached his lips to my face to kiss away my tears. Our lips met. If God had not willed your approach at that moment, what would have become of me?"

"How shameful! My child, how shameful!" said the reverend vicar.

Pepita covered her face with both hands and began to sob like a Magdalen. Her hands were in truth beautiful, more beautiful even than Don Luis had described them to be in his letters: their whiteness, their pure transparency, the tapering form of the fingers, the roseate hue, the polish and the brilliancy of the pearl-like nails, all were such as might turn the head of any man.

The virtuous vicar, notwithstanding his eighty years, could understand the fall, or rather, the slip, of Don Luis.

"Child!" he exclaimed, "don't cry so! It breaks

my heart to see you. Calm yourself; Don Luis has no doubt repented of his sin; do you repent likewise, and nothing more need be said. God will pardon you both, and make a couple of saints of you. Since Don Luis is going away the day after to-morrow, it is a sure sign that virtue has triumphed in him, and that he flees from you, as he should, that he may do penance for his sin, fulfil his vow, and return to his vocation."

"That is all very well," replied Pepita; "fulfil his vow, return to his vocation, after giving me my death-wound! Why did he love me, why did he encourage me, why did he deceive me? His kiss was a brand; it was as a hot iron with which he marked me and stamped me as his slave. Now that I am marked and enslaved, he abandons and betrays and destroys me. A good beginning to give to his missions, his preachings, and Gospel triumphs! It shall not be! By Heaven, it shall not be!"

This outbreak of anger and scorned love confounded the reverend vicar.

Pepita had risen. Her attitude, her gesture, had something in them of tragic animation. Her eyes gleamed like daggers; they shone like two suns. The vicar was silent, and regarded her almost with terror. She paced the apartment with hasty steps. She did not now seem like a timid gazel, but like an angry lioness.

"What!" she said, once more facing the vicar, "has he nothing to do but laugh at me, tear my heart to pieces, humiliate it, trample it under foot, after having cheated me out of it? He shall remember me! He shall pay me for this! If he is so holy, if he is so virtuous, why did he with his glance promise me everything? If he loves God so much, why does he seek to hurt one of God's poor creatures? Is this charity? Is this religion? No; it is pitiless selfishness."

Pepita's anger could not last long. After she had spoken the last words, it turned to dejection. She sank into a chair, weeping more bitterly than ever, and abandoning herself to real anguish.

The vicar's heart was touched with pity; but he recovered himself on seeing that the enemy gave signs of yielding.

"Pepita, child," he said, "be reasonable; don't torment yourself in this way. Console yourself with the thought that it was not without a hard struggle he was able to conquer himself; that he has not deceived you; that he loves you with his whole soul, but that God and his duty come first. This life is short, and soon passes. In heaven you will be reunited, and will love each other as the angels love. God will accept your sacrifice; he will reward you, and repay you with interest. Even your self-love ought to be satisfied. How great must be your merit, when you have caused

a man like Don Luis to waver in his resolution, and even to sin! How deep must be the wound you have made in his heart! Let this suffice you. Be generous, be courageous! Be his rival in firmness. Let him depart; cast out from your heart the fire of impure love; love him as your neighbor, for the love of God. Guard his image in your memory, but as that of the creature, reserving to the Creator the noblest part of your soul. I know not what I am saying to you, my child, for I am very much troubled; but you have a great deal of intelligence and a great deal of common sense, and you will understand what I mean. Besides, there are powerful worldly reasons against this absurd love, even if the vocation and the vow of Don Luis were not opposed to it. His father is your suitor. He aspires to your hand, even though you do not love him. Does it look well that the son should turn out now to be the rival of his father? Will not the father be displeased with the son for loving you? See how dreadful all this is, and control yourself, for the sake of Jesus and His blessed Mother!"

"How easy it is to give advice!" returned Pepita, becoming a little calmer. "How hard for me to follow it, when there is a fierce and unchained tempest, as it were, raging in my soul! I am afraid I shall go mad!"

"The advice I give you is for your own good.

Let Don Luis depart. Absence is a great remedy for the malady of love. In giving himself up to his studies, and consecrating himself to the service of the altar, he will be cured of his passion. When he is far away you will recover your serenity by degrees, and will preserve in your memory only a grateful and melancholy recollection of him that will do you no harm. It will be like a beautiful poem, whose music will harmonize your existence. Even if all your desires could be fulfilled, earthly love lasts, after all, but a short time. The delight the imagination anticipates in its enjoyment—what is it in comparison with the bitter dregs. How much better is it that your love, hardly yet contaminated, hardly despoiled of its purity, should be dissipated, and exhale itself now, rising up to heaven like a cloud of incense, than that, after it is once satisfied, it should perish through satiety! Have the courage to put away from your lips the cup while you have hardly tasted of its contents. Make a libation of them and an offering to the Divine Redeemer. He will give you, in exchange, the draft He offered to the Samaritan—a draft that does not satiate, that quenches the thirst, and that gives eternal life!"

"How good you are, father! Your holy words lend me courage. I will control myself—I will conquer myself. It would be shameful—would it not?—that Don Luis should be able to control and

conquer himself, and that I should not be able to do so? Let him depart. He is going away the day after to-morrow. Let him go, with God's blessing. See his card. He was here, with his father, to take leave of me, and I would not receive him. I will never see him again. I did not even want to preserve the poetical remembrance of him of which you speak. This love has been a nightmare; I will cast it way from me."

"Good—very good! It is thus that I want to see you—energetic, courageous."

"Ah, father, God has cast down my pride with this blow! I was insolent in my arrogance, and the scorn of this man was necessary to my self-abasement. Could I be more humbled or more resigned than I am now? Don Luis is right—I am not worthy of him. However great the efforts I might make, I could not succeed in elevating myself to him and comprehending him, in putting my spirit into perfect communication with his. I am a rude country girl, unlearned, uncultured; and he—there is no science he does not understand, no secret of which he is ignorant, no region of the intellectual world, however exalted, to which he may not soar. Thither on the wings of his genius does he mount; and me he leaves behind in this lower sphere—poor, ignorant woman that I am—incapable of following him. even in my hopes or with my aspirations!"

"But, Pepita, for Heaven's sake, don't say such things, or think them! Don Luis does not scorn you because you are ignorant, or because you are incapable of comprehending him, or for any other of those absurd reasons that you are stringing together. He goes away because he must fulfil his obligation toward God; and you should rejoice that he is going away, for you will then get over your love for him, and God will reward you for the sacrifice you make."

Pepita, who had left off crying, and had dried her tears with her handkerchief, answered quietly:

"Very well, father. I shall be very glad of it; I am almost glad now that he is going away. I long for to-morrow to pass, and for the time to come when Antoñona shall say to me when I awake, 'Don Luis is gone.' You shall see then how peace and serenity will spring up again in my heart."

"God grant it may be so!" said the reverend vicar; and, convinced that he had wrought a miracle, and almost cured Pepita's malady, he took leave of her and went home, unable to repress a certain feeling of vanity at the thought of the influence he had exercised over the noble spirit of this charming woman.

II

PEPITA, who had risen as the reverend vicar was about to take his leave, after she had closed the door, stood for a moment motionless in the middle of the room—her gaze fixed on space, her eyes tearless. A poet or an artist, seeing her thus, would have been reminded of Ariadne, as Catullus describes her, after Theseus has abandoned her on the island of Naxos. All at once, as if she had but just succeeded in untying the knot of a cord that was strangling her, Pepita broke into heartrending sobs, let loose a torrent of tears, and threw herself down on the tiled floor of her apartment. There, her face buried in her hands, her hair loose, her dress disordered, she continued to sigh and moan.

She might have remained thus for an indefinite time if Antoñona had not come to her. Antoñona had heard her sobs from without, and hurried to her apartment. When she saw her mistress extended on the floor, Antoñona gave way to a thousand extravagant expressions of fury.

"Here's a pretty sight!" she cried; "that sneak, that blackguard, that old fool, what a way he has to console his friends! I shouldn't wonder if he has committed some piece of barbarity—given a couple of kicks to this poor child, perhaps; and

now I suppose he has gone back to the church to get everything ready to sing the funeral chant, and sprinkle her with hyssop, and bury her out of sight without more ado."

Antoñona was about forty, and a hard worker—energetic, and stronger than many a laborer. She often lifted up, with scarcely more than the strength of her hand, a skin of oil or of wine weighing nearly ninety pounds, and placed it on the back of a mule, or carried a bag of wheat up to the garret where the grain was kept. Although Pepita was not a feather, Antoñona now lifted her up in her arms from the floor as if she had been one, and placed her carefully on the sofa, as though she were some delicate and precious piece of porcelain that she feared to break.

"What is the meaning of all this?" asked Antoñona. "I wager anything that drone of a vicar has been preaching you a sermon as bitter as aloes, and has left you now with your heart torn to pieces with grief."

Pepita continued to weep and sob without answering.

"Come, leave off crying, and tell me what is the matter. What has the vicar said to you?"

"He said nothing that could offend me," finally answered Pepita.

Then, seeing that Antoñona was waiting anxiously to hear her speak, and feeling the need of

unburdening herself to some one who could sympathize more fully with her, and with more human feeling, Pepita spoke as follows:

"The reverend vicar has admonished me gently to repent of my sins; to allow Don Luis to go away; to rejoice at his departure; to forget him. I have said yes to everything; I have promised him to rejoice at Don Luis's departure; I have tried to forget him, and even to hate him. But, look you, Antoñona, I can not; it is an undertaking superior to my strength. While the vicar was here I thought I had strength for everything; but no sooner had he gone than, as if God had let go His hold of me, I lost my courage, and fell, crushed with sorrow, on the floor. I had dreamed of a happy life at the side of the man I love; I already saw myself elevated to him by the miraculous power of love—my poor mind in perfect communion with his sublime intellect, my will one with his, both thinking the same thought, our hearts beating in unison. And now God has taken him away from me, and I am left alone, without hope or consolation. Is this not frightful? The arguments of the reverend vicar are just and full of wisdom; for the time, they convinced me. But he has gone away, and all those arguments now seem to me worthless—a tissue of words, lies, entanglements, and sophistries. I love Don Luis, and this argument is more powerful than all other argu-

ments put together. And if he loves me in return, why does he not leave everything and come to me, break the vows he has taken, and renounce the obligations he has contracted? I did not know what love was; now I know—there is nothing stronger on earth or in heaven. What would I not do for Don Luis? And he—he does nothing for me! Perhaps he does not love me. No; Don Luis does not love me. I have deceived myself; I was blinded by vanity. If Don Luis loved me, he would sacrifice his plans, his vows, his fame, his aspirations to be a saint and a light of the Church, he would sacrifice all to me. God forgive me, what I am about to say is horrible, but I feel it here in the depths of my heart, it burns here in my fevered brow: for him I would give even the salvation of my soul!"

"Holy Virgin!" exclaimed Antoñona.

"It is true; may our blessed Lady of Sorrows pardon me—I am mad—I know not what I say, I blaspheme!"

"Yes, child; you are talking indeed a little naughtily. Heaven help us! To think how this coxcomb of a theologian has turned your head! Well, if I were in your place, I would not take Heaven to task, which is in nowise to blame, but the jackanapes of a collegian, and I would have it out with him, or never again call myself Pepita Jiménez. I should like to go hunt him up, and

bring him here to you by the ear, and make him beg your pardon and kiss your feet on his knees."

"No, Antoñona; I see that my madness is contagious, and that you are raving too. There is, in fact, nothing left for me to do but what the reverend vicar advises. And I will do it, even though it should cost me my life. If I die for him, he will then love me; he will cherish my image in his memory, my love in his heart; and God, who is so good, will permit me to see him again in Heaven with the eyes of the soul, and will let our spirits mingle together and love each other there."

Antoñona, although of a rugged nature, and not at all sentimental, on hearing these words felt the tears start to her eyes.

"Good gracious, child!" she said; "do you want to make me take out my handkerchief and begin to bellow like a calf? Calm yourself, and don't talk about dying, even in jest. I can see that your nerves are very much excited. Sha'n't bring you a cup of fine flower tea?"

"No, thanks; leave me—you see how calm I am now."

"I shall close the window, then, to see if you can sleep. How should you feel well when you have not slept for days? The devil take that same Don Luis, with his fancy for making himself a priest! A nice price you are paying for it!"

Pepita had closed her eyes; she was calm and silent, weary now of her colloquy with Antoñona.

The latter, either thinking she was asleep, or hoping her to be so, bent over Pepita, imprinted a kiss softly and slowly on her white forehead, smoothed out the folds of her dress, arranged the windows so as to leave the room half dark, and went out on tiptoe, closing the door behind her, without making the slightest noise.

III

WHILE these things were taking place at the house of Pepita, Don Luis de Vargas was neither happier nor more tranquil in his.

His father, who scarcely let a day pass without riding out into the country, had to-day wished to take Don Luis with him; but he had excused himself, on the pretext of a headache, and Don Pedro had gone without him. Don Luis had spent the whole morning alone, delivered up to his melancholy thoughts, and continuing firm as a rock in his resolution of blotting from his soul the image of Pepita, and of consecrating himself wholly to God.

Let it not be supposed, however, that he did not love the young widow. We have already, in his letters, seen the proof of the vehemence of his passion for her, but he continued his efforts to curb it by means of the devout sentiments and elevated reflections of which he has given us in his letters so extended a specimen, and of which we may here omit a repetition, in order not to appear prolix.

Perhaps, if we examine into this matter closely, we shall find that the reasons which militated in the breast of Don Luis against his love for Pepita were not only his vow to himself—which, though

unconfirmed, was binding in his eyes—or the love of God, or respect for his father, whose rival he did not wish to be; or, finally, the vocation which he felt himself to have for the priesthood. There were other reasons of a more doubtful character than these.

Don Luis was stubborn; he was obstinate; he had that quality of soul which, well directed, constitutes what is called firmness of character, and there was nothing that lowered him more in his own eyes than to feel himself obliged to change his opinions or his conduct. The purpose of his life—a purpose which he had declared and maintained on all occasions—his moral ideal, in a word, was that of an aspirant to holiness, of a man consecrated to God, of one imbued with the sublimest religious teachings. All this could not fall to earth, as it would fall if he allowed himself to be carried away by his love for Pepita, without great discredit. Although the price, indeed, was in this case incomparably higher, yet Don Luis felt that, should he yield to his passion, he would be following the example of Esau, selling his birthright, and bringing opprobrium on his name.

Men, as a rule, allow themselves to be the playthings of circumstances; they let themselves be carried along by the current of events, instead of devoting all their energies to one single aim. We do not choose our part in life, but accept and play the

part allotted us, that which blind fortune assigns to us. The profession, the political faith, the entire life of many men, depend on chance circumstances, on what is fortuitous, on the caprice and the unexpected turns of fate.

Against all this the pride of Don Luis vigorously rebelled. What would be thought of him, and, above all, what would he think of himself, if the ideal of his life, the new man that he had created in his soul, if all his plans of virtue, of honor, and even of holy ambition, should vanish in an instant, should melt away in the warmth of a glance, at the fugitive flame of a pair of beautiful eyes, as the hoar-frost melts in the yet mild ray of the morning sun?

These and other egotistic reasons militated against the young widow, side by side with others more weighty and legitimate, but every argument clothed itself in the same religious garb, so that Don Luis himself was unable to recognize and distinguish between them, believing to be the love of God not only what was in truth the love of God, but also self-love. He recalled to mind, for instance, the examples of many saints who had resisted greater temptations than his, and he did not wish to be less than they. And he recalled to mind, above all, the notable firmness of St. Chrysostom, who was able to disregard the caresses of a good and tender mother, and her tears and gentle

entreaties, and all the eloquent and touching words she spoke to him, in the very room where he was born, to the end that he might not abandon her and become a priest. And after reflecting on this, Don Luis could not tolerate in himself the weakness of being unable to reject the entreaties of a woman who was a stranger to him, whom he had known for so short a time, and of still wavering between his duty and the attractions of one who perhaps, after all, did not really love him, but was only a coquette.

Don Luis then reflected on the supreme position of the sacerdotal dignity to which he was called, regarding it in his thoughts as superior to all the dignities and unsatisfying honors of the world, since it was founded neither by any mortal man, nor by the caprice of the variable and servile populace, nor by the irruption or invasion of barbarians, nor by the violence of rebellious armies urged on by greed, nor by angel nor archangel, nor by any created power; but by the Paraclete Himself. How for a motive so unworthy, for a mere woman, for a tear or two, feigned perhaps, scorn that august dignity, that authority which was not conceded by God even to the archangels nearest to His throne? How should he descend to be one of the obscure people, become one of the flock—he, who had dreamed of being the shepherd, tying and untying on earth what God should tie and untie in Heaven,

pardoning sins, regenerating the people by water and by the spirit, teaching them in the name of an infallible authority, pronouncing judgments that should be ratified and confirmed by the Lord of the heavens—he, the instructor and the minister in tremendous mysteries inscrutable by human reason, calling down from Heaven, not, like Elias, the flame that consumes the victim, but the Holy Spirit, the Word made flesh, the river of grace that purifies hearts and makes them clean like unalloyed gold?

When Don Luis let his mind dwell on these thoughts his spirit took wings and soared up above the clouds into the empyrean, and poor Pepita Jiménez remained below, far away, and hardly within sight.

But the wings of his imagination soon drooped, and the spirit of Don Luis touched earth again. Again he saw Pepita, so graceful, so young, so ingenuous, and so enamored. Pepita combated in his soul his firmest and most deep-seated resolutions, and Don Luis feared that in the end she would put them all to flight.

In this way was Don Luis allowing himself to be tormented by opposing thoughts, that made war on each other, when Currito, without asking leave or license, entered his room.

Currito, who had held his cousin in very slight esteem so long as he was only a student of theology,

now regarded him with wonder and veneration, looking upon him, from the moment when he had seen him manage Lucero so skilfully, as something more than human.

To know theology and not know how to ride, had discredited Don Luis in the eyes of Currito; but when Currito saw that, in addition to his learning, and to all those other matters of which he himself knew nothing, although he supposed them to be difficult and perplexing, Don Luis could also keep his seat so admirably on the back of a fiery horse, his veneration and his affection for his cousin knew no bounds. Currito was an idler, a good-for-nothing, a very block of wood; but he had an affectionate and loyal heart.

To Don Luis, who was the idol of Currito, happened what happens with all superior natures when inferior persons take a liking to them. Don Luis permitted himself to be loved—that is to say, he was governed despotically—by Currito in matters of little importance. And as for men like Don Luis there are hardly any matters of importance in common daily life, the result was that Don Luis was led about by Currito like a little dog.

"I have come for you," the latter said, "to take you with me to the clubhouse, which is full of people to-day, and unusually gay. What is the use of sitting here alone gazing into vacancy, as if you were waiting to catch flies?"

Don Luis, without offering any resistance, took his hat and cane, as though the words were a command, and saying, "Let us go wherever you wish," followed Currito, who led the way, very well pleased with the influence he exercised over his cousin.

The clubhouse was full of people, owing to the festivities of the morrow, which was St. John's day. Besides the gentry of the village many strangers were there, who had come in from the neighboring villages to be present at the fair and the vigil in the evening.

The principal point of reunion was the courtyard, which was paved with marble. In its centre played a fountain, which was adorned with flower pots containing roses, pinks, sweet basil, and other flowers. Around this courtyard ran a corridor or gallery supported by marble columns, in which, as well as in the various saloons that opened into it, were tables for *ombre,* others with newspapers lying on them, others where coffee and other refreshments were served, and finally, lounges, benches, and several easy-chairs. The walls were like snow, from frequent whitening; nor were pictures wanting for their adornment. There were French colored lithographs, a minute explanation of the subject of each being written, both in French and in Spanish below. Some of them represented scenes in the life of Napoleon, from Toulon to St. Hel-

ena; others, the adventures of Matilda and Malek-Adel; others, incidents in love and war, in the lives of the Templar, Rebecca, Lady Rowena, and Ivanhoe; and others, the gallantries, the intrigues, the lapses and the conversions of Louis XIV. and Mademoiselle de la Vallière.

Currito took Don Luis, and Don Luis allowed himself to be taken, to the saloon where were gathered the cream of the fashion, the dandies and *cocodés* of the village and of the surrounding district. Prominent among these was the Count of Genazahar, of the neighboring city of —. The Count was an illustrious and much admired personage. He had made visits of great length to Madrid and Seville, and, whether as a country dandy or as a young nobleman, was always attired by the most fashionable tailors.

The Count of Genazahar was a little past thirty. He was good-looking, and he knew it; and could boast of his prowess in peace and in war, in duels and in love-making. The Count, however—and this notwithstanding the fact that he had been one of the most persistent suitors of Pepita—had received the sugar-coated pill of refusal that she was accustomed to bestow on those who paid their addresses to her and aspired to her hand.

The wound inflicted on his pride by this rejection had never quite healed. Love had turned into hatred, and the Count lost no occasion of giv-

ing utterance to his feelings, holding Pepita up on such occasions to ridicule as a prude.

The Count was engaged in this agreeable exercise when, by an evil chance, Don Luis and Currito approached and joined the crowd that was listening to the odd species of panegyric, which opened to receive them. Don Luis, as if the Devil himself had had the arrangement of the matter, found himself face to face with the Count, who was speaking as follows:

"She's a cunning one, this same Pepita Jiménez, with more fancies and whims than the Princess Micomicona. She wants to make us forget that she was born in poverty, and lived in poverty until she married that accursed usurer, Don Gumersindo, and took possession of his dollars. The only good action this same widow has performed in her life was to conspire with Satan to send the rogue quickly to hell, and free the earth from such a contamination and plague. Pepita now has a hobby for virtue and for chastity. All that may be very well; but how do we know that she has not a secret intrigue with some plow-boy, and is not deceiving the world as if she were Queen Artemisia herself?"

People of quiet tastes, who seldom take part in reunions of men only, may perhaps be scandalized by this language. It may appear to them indecent and brutal even to the point of incredibility; but

those who know the world will confess that language like this is very generally employed in it, and that the most amiable and agreeable women, the most honorable matrons, if they chance to have an enemy, or even if they have none, are often made the subjects of accusations no less infamous and vile than those made by the Count against Pepita; for scandal, or, to speak more accurately, disrespect and insult are often indulged in for the purpose of showing wit and effrontery.

Don Luis had from childhood been accustomed to the consideration and respect of those around him, first, of the servants and dependents of his father, who gratified him in all his wishes, and then of every one in the seminary, not only because he was a nephew of the dean, but also on account of his own merits, and when he heard the insolent Count thus drag in the dust the name of the woman he loved, he felt as if a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet.

But how undertake her defense? He knew, indeed, that although he was neither husband, brother, nor other relative of Pepita's he might yet come forward in her defense as a man of honor; but he saw what scandal this would give rise to, since, far from saying a word in her favor, all the other persons present joined in applauding the wit of the Count. He, already the minister, almost, of a God of peace, could not be the one to give the

lie to this ruffian, and thus expose himself to the risk of a quarrel.

Don Luis was on the point of departing in silence; but his heart would not consent to this, and striving to clothe himself with an authority which was justified neither by his years nor by his countenance, where the beard had scarcely begun to make its appearance, nor by his presence in that place, he began to speak with earnest eloquence in denunciation of all slanderers, and to reproach the Count, with the freedom of a Christian and in severe accents, with the vileness of his conduct.

This was to preach in the desert, or worse. The Count answered his homily with gibes and jests; the bystanders, among whom were many strangers, took the part of the jester, notwithstanding the fact that Don Luis was the son of the squire. Even Currito, who was of no account whatever, and who was, besides, a coward, although he did not laugh, yet made no effort to take the part of his friend, and the latter was obliged to withdraw, disturbed and humiliated by the ridicule he had drawn on himself.

IV

"'THIS flower only was wanting to complete the nosegay," muttered poor Don Luis between his teeth when he had reached his house and shut himself up in his room, vexed and ill at ease because of the jeers of which he had been the butt. He exaggerated them to himself; they seemed unendurable. He threw himself into a chair, depressed and disheartened, and a thousand contradictory ideas assailed his mind.

The blood of his father, which boiled in his veins, incited him to anger, and urged him to throw aside the clerical garb, as he had in the beginning been advised to do in the village, and then give the Count his deserts; but the whole future he had planned for himself would be thus at a blow destroyed. He pictured to himself the dean disowning him; and even the Pope, who had already sent the pontifical dispensation permitting him to be ordained before the required age, and the bishop of the diocese, who had based the petition for the dispensation on his approved virtue and learning and on the firmness of his vocation —all appeared before him now to reproach him.

Then those other arguments, cited by his father, of which the apostle St. James, the bishops of the

Middle Ages, and St. Ignatius Loyola had made use, occurred to his mind, and now seemed less preposterous than before, and he almost repented of not having put them into practise.

He then recalled the custom of a distinguished philosopher of Persia, of our own day, mentioned in a book recently written on that country—a custom which consisted in punishing with harsh words his hearers and pupils when they laughed at his teachings or could not understand them, and if this did not suffice, in descending from his chair, sabre in hand, and giving them all a beating. This method, as it appears, had proved efficacious, especially in controversy; although it had chanced that the said philosopher, coming across an opponent of the same way of thinking as himself, had received a severe wound in the face from him.

Don Luis, in the midst of his mortification and ill-humor, could not help laughing at the absurdity of this recollection. He thought philosophers were not wanting in Spain who would willingly adopt the Persian method, and if he himself did not put it into practise, it was certainly not through fear of the wounds he might receive, but through considerations of greater weight.

At last better thoughts returned and somewhat comforted his soul.

"I did very wrong in preaching there," he said to himself; "I should have remained silent. Our

Lord Jesus Christ has said, 'Give not that which is holy to dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.' "

"But, no; why should I complain? Why should I return evil for evil? Why should I allow myself to be vanquished by anger? Many holy fathers have said, 'Anger in a priest is even worse than lasciviousness.' The anger of priests has caused many tears to be shed, and has been the cause of terrible evils."

"It was anger—the terrible counselor—that at times persuaded them that it was necessary for the people to shed blood at the Divine command, and that brought before their sanguinary eyes the vision of Isaiah; they have then seen, and caused their fanatic followers to see, the meek Lamb converted into an inexorable avenger, descending from the summit of Edom, proud in the multitude of his strength, trampling the nations under foot, as the treader tramples the grapes in the wine-press, their garments raised, and covered with blood to the thighs. Ah, no. My God! I am about to become Thy minister. Thou art the God of peace, and my first duty should be meekness. Thou makest the sun to shine on the just and the unjust, and pourest down upon all alike the fertilizing rain of inexhaustible goodness. Thou art our Father, who dwellest in the heavens, and we should be perfect,

even as Thou art perfect, pardoning those who have offended us, and asking Thee to pardon them, because they know not what they do. I should recall to mind the beatitudes of the Scripture: Blessed are ye when they revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil things against you. The minister of God, or he who is about to become His minister, must be humble, peaceable, lowly of heart; not like the oak that lifts itself up proudly until the thunderbolt strike it, but like the fragrant herbs of the woods and the modest flowers of the fields, that give sweeter and more graceful perfume after the rustic has trodden them under foot."

In these and other meditations of a like nature the hours passed until three o'clock, when Don Pedro, who had just returned from the country, entered his son's room to call him to dinner. The gay joviality of his father, his jests, his affectionate attentions during the meal, were all of no avail to draw Don Luis from his melancholy, or to give him an appetite; he ate little, and scarcely spoke while they were at table.

Although much troubled by the silent melancholy of his son, whose health, though indeed robust, might nevertheless suffer from it, Don Pedro—who rose with the dawn and had a busy time of it during the day—when he had finished his after-dinner cigar and taken his cup of coffee

and his glass of anisette, felt fatigued, and went, according to his custom, to take a long nap.

Don Luis had been careful not to draw the attention of his father to the offense done him by the Count of Genazahar; for Don Pedro, who, for his part, was not preparing for the priesthood, and who, besides, was not of a very meek disposition, would otherwise have rushed instantly to wreak the vengeance his son had foregone.

When his father had retired the young man also left the dining-room, that he might give himself up undisturbed to his thoughts in the seclusion of his own apartment.

V

Don Luis had been sunk in meditation for a long time, seated before his desk, with his elbows resting upon it, when he heard a noise close by. He raised his eyes and saw standing beside him the meddlesome Antoñona, who, although of such massive proportions, had entered like a shadow, and was now watching him attentively, with a mixture of pity and of anger.

Antoñona, taking advantage of the hour in which the servants dined and Don Pedro slept, had penetrated thus far without being observed, and had opened the door of the room and closed it behind her so gently that Don Luis, even if he had been less absorbed, would not have noticed it.

She had come resolved to hold a very serious conference with Don Luis, but she did not quite know what she was going to say to him. Nevertheless, she had asked heaven or hell, whichever of the two it may have been, to loosen her tongue and bestow upon her the gift of speech—not such grotesque and vulgar speech as she generally used, but correct, elegant, and adapted to the noble reflections and beautiful things she had in her mind and wanted to express.

When Don Luis saw Antoñona he frowned, and

showed by his manner how much this visit displeased him, at the same time saying roughly:

"What do you want here? Go away!"

"I have come to call you to account about my young mistress," returned Antoñona, quietly, "and I shall not go away until you have answered me."

She then drew a chair toward the table and sat down in it, facing Don Luis with coolness and effrontery.

Don Luis, seeing there was no help for it, restrained his anger, armed himself with patience, and, in accents less harsh than before, exclaimed:

"Say what you have to say!"

"I have to say," resumed Antoñona, "that what you are plotting against my mistress is a piece of wickedness. You are behaving like a villain. You have bewitched her; you have given her some malignant potion. The poor angel is going to die; she neither eats nor sleeps, nor has a moment's peace, on account of you. To-day she has had two or three hysterical attacks at the bare thought of your going away. A good deed you have done before becoming a priest! Tell me, wretch, why did you not stay where you were, with your uncle, instead of coming here? She, who was so free, so completely mistress of her own will, enslaving that of others, and allowing her own to be taken captive by none, has fallen into your treacherous snares. Your hypocritical sanctity was doubtless

the lure you employed. With your theologies and your pious humbug you have acted like the wily and cruel sportsman, who whistles to attract the silly thrushes only to catch them in his net."

"Antoñona," returned Don Luis, "leave me in peace. For God's sake, cease torturing me! I am a villain; I confess it. I ought not to have looked at your mistress; I ought not to have allowed her to believe that I loved her; but I loved her, and I love her still, with my whole heart; and I have given her no other potion or philtre than the love I have for her. It is my duty, nevertheless, to cast away, to forget this love. God commands me to do so. Do you imagine that the sacrifice I make will not be—is not already—a tremendous one? Pepita ought to arm herself with fortitude and make a similar sacrifice."

"You do not give even that consolation to the unhappy girl," replied Antoñona. "You sacrifice voluntarily, on the altar, this woman who loves you, who is already yours—your victim. But she—how do you belong to her that she should offer you up as a sacrifice? What is the precious jewel she is going to renounce, what the beautiful ornament she is going to cast into the flames, but an ill-requited love? How is she going to give to God what she does not possess? Is she going to try to cheat God, and say to Him: 'My God, since he does not love me, here he is; I offer him up to

you; I will not love him either.' God never laughs —if He did, He would laugh at such a present as that!"

Don Luis, confounded, did not know what answer to return to these arguments of Antoñona, more painful than her former pinches. Besides, it was repugnant to him to discuss the metaphysics of love with a servant.

"Let us leave aside," he said, "these idle discussions. I can not cure the malady of your mistress. What would you have me do?"

"What would I have you do?" replied Antoñona, more gently and with insinuating accents; "I will tell you what I would have you do. If you can not cure the malady of my mistress, you should at least alleviate it a little. Are you not saintly? Well, the saints are compassionate, and courageous besides. Don't run away like an ill-mannered coward, without saying good-by. Come to see my mistress, who is sick. Do this work of mercy."

"And what would be gained by such a visit? It would aggravate her malady, instead of curing it."

"It will not do so; you don't see the matter in its proper light. You shall go to see her, and, with your honeyed tongue and the gift of the gab that Nature has bestowed upon you, you will put some resignation into her soul, and leave her consoled for your departure; and if you tell her, in addition

to this, that you love her, and that it is only for the sake of God you are leaving her, her woman's vanity, at least, will not be wounded."

"What you propose to me is to tempt God; it is dangerous both for her and for me."

"And why should it be to tempt God? Since God can see the rectitude and the purity of your intentions, will He not grant you His favor and His grace that you may not yield to temptation during the visit to her, which it is but justice you should make? Ought you not to fly to her to deliver her from despair, and bring her back to the right path? If she should die of grief at seeing herself scorned; or if, in a frenzy, she should seize a rope and hang herself to a beam, I tell you, your remorse would be harder to bear than the flames of pitch and sulphur that surround the caldrons of Lucifer."

"This is horrible! I would not have her grow desperate. I shall arm myself with courage—I will go to see her."

"May Heaven bless you! But my heart told me you would go. How good you are!"

"When do you wish me to go?"

"To-night, at ten o'clock precisely. I will be at the street-door waiting for you, and will take you to her."

"Does she know you have come to see me?"

"She does not—it was all my own idea; but I will prepare her cautiously, so that the surprise,

the unexpected joy of your visit, may not be too much for her. You promise me to come?"

"I will go."

"Good-by. Don't fail to come. At ten o'clock precisely I shall be at the door."

And Antoñona hurried away, descended the steps two at a time, and so gained the street.

VI

It can not be denied that Antoñona had displayed great prudence, and that her language had been so dignified and proper that some may think it apocryphal, if there were not the very best authority for all that is related here, and if we did not know, besides, the wonders a woman may work by her natural cleverness when she is spurred on by interest or by some strong passion.

Great, indeed, was the affection Antoñona entertained for her mistress, and, seeing her so much in love and in such desperate case, she could do no less than seek a remedy for her ills. The consent she had succeeded in obtaining from Don Luis was an unexpected triumph; and in order to derive the greatest possible advantage from this triumph, she was obliged to make the most of her time, and to use all her wordly wisdom in preparing for the occasion.

Antoñona had suggested ten as the hour of Don Luis's visit, because this was the hour in which Don Luis and Pepita had been accustomed to see each other in the now abolished or suspended gatherings at the house of the latter. She had suggested this hour also in order to avoid giving rise to scandal or slander; for she had once heard a preacher say

that, according to the Gospel, there is nothing so wicked as scandal, and that a scandal-monger ought to be flung into the sea with a millstone hung round his neck.

Antoñona then returned to the house of her mistress, very well satisfied with herself, and with the firm determination so to arrange matters that the remedy she had sought should not prove useless, or aggravate instead of curing Pepita's malady. She resolved to say nothing of the matter to Pepita herself until the last moment, when she would tell her that Don Luis had asked her of his own accord at what hour he might make a farewell visit, and that she had said ten.

In order to avoid giving rise to talk, she determined that Don Luis should not be seen to enter the house, and for this the hour and the internal arrangement of the house itself were alike propitious. At ten the street would be full of people, on account of the vigil, which would make it easier for Don Luis to reach the house without being observed. To enter the hall would be the work of a moment, and Antoñona, who would be waiting for him, could then take him to the library without any one seeing him.

All, or at least the greater part, of the handsome country-houses of Andalusia are built as double rather than single houses. Each of these double houses has its own door. The principal door leads

to the courtyard, which is paved and surrounded by columns, to the parlors and the other apartments of the family. The other door leads to the inner yards, the stable, and coach-house, the kitchens, the mill, the wine-press, the granaries, the buildings where the oil, the must, the alcohol, the brandy, and the vinegar are kept in large jars, and also to the cask stores, or cellars, where the wine, new and old, is stored in pipes or barrels. This second house, or portion of a house, although it may be situated in the heart of a town of twenty or twenty-five thousand inhabitants, is called the "farmhouse." The overseer, the foreman, the muleteer, the principal workmen, and the domestics who have been longest in the service of the master are accustomed to gather here in the evenings, during the winter, around the enormous fireplace of a spacious kitchen, and in summer in the open air, or in some cool and well-ventilated apartment, and there chat or take their ease until the master's family are ready to retire.

Antoñona was of opinion that the colloquy or explanation which she desired should take place between her mistress and Don Luis must be absolutely undisturbed, and interrupted by no one; and she therefore determined that, as it was St. John's Eve, the maid-servants of Pepita should be to-night released from all their occupations, and should go to amuse themselves at the farmhouse,

where, in union with the rustic laborers, they might get up impromptu amusements, to consist of the recitation of pretty verses, playing the castanets, and dancing jigs and fandangoes.

In this manner the dwelling-house—with no other occupants than Pepita and herself—would be silent and almost deserted, and therefore quiet enough for the interview she had planned, and on which perhaps—or rather to a certainty—depended the fate of two persons of such distinguished merit.

VII

WHILE Antoñona went about turning over and arranging in her mind all these things, Don Luis had no sooner been left alone than he repented of having proceeded with so much haste, and weakly consenting to the interview Antoñona had asked of him. As he reflected upon it it seemed to him full of peril. He saw before him all the danger to which he was exposing himself, and he could perceive no advantage whatever in thus making a visit to the beautiful widow in secret and by stealth.

To go and see her in order to succumb to her attractions and fall into her snares, making a mockery of his vows, and placing not only the bishop, who had endorsed his petition for a dispensation, but even the holy Pontiff, who had conceded it, in a false position, by relinquishing his purpose of becoming a priest, seemed to him very dishonorable. It was, besides, a treason against his father, who loved Pepita and desired to marry her; and to visit her in order to undeceive her in regard to his love for her, seemed to him a greater refinement of cruelty than to depart without saying anything.

Influenced by these considerations, the first thought of Don Luis was to fail, without excuse or warning, to keep his appointment, and leave

Antoñona to wait in vain for him in the hall; but then, as Antoñona had, in all probability, already announced his visit to her mistress, he would, by failing to go, unpardonably offend, not only Antoñona, but Pepita herself.

He then resolved on writing Pepita a very affectionate and discreet letter, excusing himself from going to see her, justifying his conduct, consoling her, manifesting his tender sentiments toward her, while letting her see that duty and Heaven were before everything, and endeavoring to inspire her with the courage to make the same sacrifice as he himself was making.

He made four or five different attempts to write this letter. He blotted a great deal of paper which he afterward tore up, and could not, in the end, succeed in getting the letter to his taste. Now it was dry, cold, pedantic, like a poor sermon or a schoolmaster's discourse; now its contents betrayed a childish apprehension, as if Pepita were a monster lying in wait to devour him; now it had other faults not less serious. In fine, after wasting many sheets of paper in the attempt, the letter remained unwritten.

"There is no help for it," said Don Luis to himself; "the die is cast. I must summon up all my courage and go."

He comforted his spirit with the hope that his self-control would not forsake him during the

coming interview, and that God would endow his lips with eloquence to persuade Pepita, who was so good, that it was she herself who, sacrificing her earthly love, urged him to fulfil his vocation, resembling in this those holy women, of whom there are not wanting examples, who not only renounced the society of a bridegroom or a lover, but even the companionship of a husband, as is narrated, for instance, in the life of St. Edward of England, whose queen lived with him as a sister.

Don Luis felt himself consoled and encouraged by this thought, and he already pictured himself as St. Edward, and Pepita as Queen Edith. And under the form and in the character of this virgin queen Pepita appeared to him, if possible, more graceful, charming, and romantic than ever.

Don Luis was not, however, altogether so secure of himself, or so tranquil, as he should have been, after forming the resolution of following the example of St. Edward. There seemed to him something almost criminal, which he could not well define, in the visit he was about to make to Pepita without his father's knowledge. He felt tempted to awaken him from his nap, and to reveal everything to him; two or three times he rose from his chair with this purpose, then he stopped, feeling that such a revelation would be dishonoring and a disgraceful exhibition of childishness. He might betray his own secrets, but to betray those of Pepita,

in order to set himself right with his father, seemed to him contemptible enough. The baseness and the ridiculous meanness of the action were still further increased in his eyes by the reflection that what prompted him to it was the fear of not being strong enough to resist temptation.

Don Luis kept silence, therefore, and revealed nothing to his father.

More than this, he did not even feel that he had the confidence and composure necessary to present himself before his father, with the consciousness of this secret interview interposing itself as a barrier between them. He was, indeed, so excited and so beside himself, under the influence of the contending emotions that disputed the possession of his soul, that he felt as if the room, though a large one, was too small to contain him. Starting to his feet, he paced with rapid strides up and down the floor, like some wild animal in his cage, impatient of confinement. At last, although—being summer—the window was open, he felt as if he could remain here no longer, lest he should suffocate for want of air; as if the roof pressed down upon his head; as if, to breathe, he needed the whole atmosphere; to walk, he required space without limits; to lift up his brow and exhale his sighs and elevate his thoughts, to have nothing less than the immeasurable vault of heaven above him.

Impelled by this necessity, he took his hat and

cane and went out into the street. Thence, avoiding every one he knew, he passed on into the country, plunging into the leafiest and most sequestered recesses of the gardens and walks that encompass the village and make for a radius of more than half a league a paradise of its surroundings.

We have said but little, thus far, concerning the personal appearance of Don Luis. Be it known, then, that he was in every sense of the word a handsome fellow—tall, well-formed, with black hair, and eyes also black and full of fire and tenderness. His complexion was dark, his teeth were white, his lips delicate and curling slightly, which gave his countenance an appearance of disdain; his bearing was manly and bold, notwithstanding the reserve and meekness proper to the sacred calling of his election. The whole mien of Don Luis bore, in a word, that indescribable stamp of distinction and nobility that seems to be—though this is not always the case—the peculiar quality and exclusive privilege of aristocratic families.

On beholding Don Luis one could not but confess that Pepita Jiménez was esthetic by instinct.

Don Luis hurried on with precipitate steps in the course he had taken, jumping across brooks and hardly glancing at surrounding objects, almost as a bull stung by a hornet might do. The countrymen he met, the market-gardeners who saw him pass, very possibly took him for a madman.

Tired at last of walking on so aimlessly, he sat down at the foot of a stone cross near the ruins of an ancient convent of St. Francis de Paul, almost two miles from the village, and there plunged anew into meditation, but of so confused a character that he himself was scarcely conscious of what was passing in his mind.

The sound of the distant bells, calling the faithful to prayer, and reminding them of the salutation of the angel to the Most Holy Virgin, reached him in his solitude through the evening air, and at last drew Don Luis from his meditations, recalling him once more to the world of reality.

The sun had just sunk behind the gigantic peaks of the neighboring mountains, making their summits—in the shape of pyramids, needles, and broken obelisks—stand out in bold relief against a background of topaz and amethyst—for such was the appearance of the heavens, gilded by the beams of the setting sun. The shadows began to deepen over the plain, and on the mountains opposite to those behind which the sun was sinking the more elevated peaks shone like flaming gold or crystal.

The windows and the white walls of the distant sanctuary of the Virgin, patroness of the village, situated on the summit of a hill, and of another small temple or hermitage situated on a nearer hill called Calvary, still shone like two beacon lights touched by the oblique rays of the setting sun.

Nature exhaled a poetic melancholy, and all things seemed to intone a hymn to the Creator, with that silent music heard only by the spirit. The slow tolling of the bells, softened and almost lost in the distance, hardly disturbed the repose of the earth, and invited to prayer without distracting the senses by their noise. Don Luis uncovered his head, knelt down at the foot of the cross, the pedestal of which had served him as a seat, and repeated with profound devotion the *Angelus Domini.*

The shades of evening were gathering fast, but when Night unfolds her mantle, and spreads it over those favored regions, she delights to adorn it with the most luminous stars and with a still brighter moon. The vault of heaven did not exchange its cerulean hue for the blackness of night; it still retained it, though it had assumed a deeper shade. The atmosphere was so clear and pure that myriads of stars could be descried shining far into the limitless depths of space. The moon silvered the tops of the trees, and touched with its splendor the waters of the brooks that gleamed, luminous and transparent, with colors as changeful and iridescent as the opal. In the leafy groves the nightingales were singing. Herbs and flowers shed a rich perfume. Countless multitudes of glowworms shone like diamonds or carbuncles among the grass and wild flowers along the banks of the brooks. In

this region the fire-fly is not found, but the common glowworm abounds, and sheds a most brilliant light. Fruit trees still in blossom, acacias, and roses without number perfumed the air with their rich fragrance.

Don Luis felt himself swayed, seduced, vanquished by this voluptuousness of Nature, and began to doubt himself. He felt compelled, however, to fulfil his promise and keep his appointment.

Deviating often from the straight path, hesitating at times whether he should not rather push forward to the source of the river, where, at the foot of a mountain and in the midst of the most enchanting surroundings, the crystal torrent that waters the neighboring gardens and orchards bursts from the living rock, he turned back, with slow and lingering step, in the direction of the village.

In proportion as he approached it, the terror inspired by the thought of what he was about to do increased. He plunged into the thickest of the wood, hoping there to behold some sign, some wonder, some warning, that should draw him back. He thought often of the student Lisardo, and wished that, like him, he might behold his own burial. But heaven smiled with her thousand lights, and invited to love; the stars twinkled at each other with love; the nightingales sang of love;

even the crickets chirped their amorous serenade. All the earth, on this tranquil and beautiful night, seemed given up to love. All was life, peace, joy.

Where was his guardian angel now? Had he abandoned Don Luis as already lost; or, deeming that he ran no risk, did he make no effort to turn him from his purpose? Who can say? Perhaps from the danger that menaced him would in the end result a triumph? St. Edward and Queen Edith presented themselves again to the imagination of Don Luis, and the vision strengthened his resolution.

Engrossed in these meditations, he delayed his return, and was still some distance from the village when ten, the hour appointed for his interview with Pepita, struck from the parish clock. The ten strokes of the bell were ten blows that, falling on his heart, wounded it as with a physical pain—a pain in which dread and treacherous disquiet were blended with a ravishing sweetness.

Don Luis hastened his steps, that he might not be too late, and shortly found himself in the village.

The hamlet presented a most animated scene. Young girls flocked to wash their faces at the spring outside the village; those who had sweethearts, that their sweethearts might remain faithful to them; and those who had not, that they might obtain sweethearts. Here and there women and children were returning from the fields, with ver-

bena, branches of rosemary, and other plants, which they had been gathering, to burn as a charm. Guitars tinkled on every side, words of love were to be overheard, and everywhere happy and tender couples were to be seen walking together. The vigil and the early morning of St. John's Day, although a Christian festival, still retain a certain savor of paganism and primitive naturalism. This may be because of the approximate concurrence of this festival and the summer solstice. In any case, the scene to-night was purely mundane and not religious. All was love and gallantry. In our old romances and legends the Moor always carries off the beautiful Christian princess, and the Christian knight receives the reward of his devotion to the Moorish princess on the eve or in the early morning of St. John's Day; and the traditionary custom of the old romances had been, to all appearances, preserved in the village.

The streets were full of people. The whole village was out of doors, in addition to the strangers from the surrounding country. Progress, thus rendered extremely difficult, was still further impeded by the multitude of little tables laden with almond sweetmeats, honey-cakes, and biscuits, with fruit-stalls, with booths for the sale of dolls and toys, and cake-shops, where gipsies, young and old, fried the dough—tainting the air with the odor of oil—weighed and served the cakes, responded

with ready wit to the compliments of the gallants who passed by, and told fortunes.

Don Luis sought to avoid meeting any of his acquaintances, and, when he caught sight by chance of any one he knew, turned his steps in another direction. Thus, by degrees, he reached the entrance to Pepita's house without having been stopped or spoken to by any one. His heart now began to beat with violence, and he paused a moment to recover his serenity. He looked at his watch; it was almost half-past ten.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed; "she has been waiting for me nearly half an hour."

He then hurried his pace and entered the hall. The lamp by which it was always lighted was burning dimly on this particular evening.

No sooner had Don Luis entered the hall than a hand, or rather a claw, seized him by the right arm. It belonged to Antoñona, who said to him under her breath:

"A pretty fellow you are, for a divinity student! Ingrate! Good-for-nothing! Vagabond! I began to think you were not coming. Where have you been, you idiot? How dare you delay, as if you had no interest in the matter, when the salt of the earth is melting for you, and the sun of beauty awaits you?"

While Antoñona was giving utterance to these complaints, she did not stand still, but continued

to go forward, dragging after her by the arm the now cowed and silent collegian. They passed the grated door, which Antoñona closed carefully and noiselessly behind them. They crossed the courtyard, ascended the stairs, passed through some corridors and two sitting-rooms, and arrived at last at the door of the library, which was closed.

Profound silence reigned throughout the house. The library was situated in its interior, and was thus inaccessible to the noises of the street. The only sounds that reached it, dim and vague, were the clatter of castanets, the thrumming of a guitar, and the murmur of the voices of Pepita's servants, who were holding their impromptu dance in the farmhouse.

Antoñona opened the door of the library and pushed Don Luis toward it, at the same time announcing him in these words:

"Here is Don Luis, who has come to take leave of you."

This announcement being made with due ceremony, the discreet Antoñona withdrew, leaving the visitor and her mistress at their ease, and closing the door behind her.

VIII

At this point in our narrative we can not refrain from calling attention to the character of authenticity that stamps the present history, and paying a tribute of admiration to the scrupulous exactness of the person who composed it. For, were the incidents related in these *paralipomena* fictitious, as in a novel, there is not the least doubt but that an interview so important and of such transcendent interest as that of Pepita and Don Luis would have been brought about by less vulgar means than those here employed.

Perhaps our hero and heroine, in the course of some new excursion into the country, might have been surprised by a sudden and frightful tempest, thus finding themselves obliged to take refuge in the ruins of some ancient castle or Moorish tower, with the reputation, of course, of being haunted by ghosts or other supernatural visitants. Perhaps our hero and heroine might have fallen into the power of a party of bandits, from whom they would have escaped, thanks to the presence of mind and courage of Don Luis; taking shelter afterward for the night—they two alone, and without the possibility of avoiding it—in a cavern or grotto. Or, finally, perhaps the author would have ar-

ranged the matter in such a way that Pepita and her vacillating admirer would have been obliged to make a journey by sea, and, although at the present day there are neither pirates nor Algerine corsairs, it is not difficult to invent a good shipwreck, during which Don Luis could have saved Pepita's life, taking refuge with her afterward on a desert island, or some other equally romantic and solitary place.

Any one of these devices would more artfully prepare the way for the tender colloquy of the lovers, and would better serve to exculpate Don Luis. We are of the opinion, nevertheless, that, instead of censuring the author for not having had recourse to such complications as those we have mentioned, we ought rather to thank him for his conscientiousness in sacrificing to the truth of his relation the marvelous effect he might have produced had he ventured to adorn it with incidents and episodes drawn from his own fancy.

If the means by which this interview was brought about were, in reality, only the officiousness and the skill of Antoñona, and the weakness with which Don Luis acceded to her request that he should grant it, why forge lies, and cause the two lovers to be impelled, as it were, by Fate, to see and speak with each other alone, to the great danger of the virtue and honor of both? Nothing of the kind! Whether Don Luis did well or ill in

keeping his appointment, and whether Pepita Jiménez, whom Antoñona had already told that Don Luis was coming of his own accord to see her, did well or ill in rejoicing over that somewhat mysterious and untimely visit, let us not throw the blame on Fate, but on the personages themselves who figure in this history, and on the passions by which they are actuated. We confess to a great affection for Pepita; but the truth is before everything, and must be declared, even should it be to the prejudice of our heroine.

At eight o'clock, then, Antoñona had told her that Don Luis was coming, and Pepita, who had been talking of dying, whose eyes were red, and her eyelids slightly inflamed with weeping, and whose hair was in some disorder, thought of nothing from that moment but of adorning and dressing herself to receive Don Luis. She bathed her face with warm water, so that the ravages her tears had made might be effaced to the exact point of leaving her beauty unimpaired, while still allowing it to be seen that she had wept. She arranged her hair so as to display, rather than a studied care in its arrangement, a certain graceful and artistic carelessness, that fell short of disorder, however, which would have been indecorous; she polished her nails, and, as it was not fit that she should receive Don Luis in a wrapper, she put on a simple housedress. In fine, she managed instinctively that all

the details of her toilet should concur in heightening her beauty and grace, but without allowing any trace to be perceived of the art, the labor, and the time employed in the details. She would have it appear, on the contrary, as if all this beauty and grace were the free gift of Nature, something inherent in her person, no matter how she might, owing to the vehemence of her passions, neglect it on occasion.

Pepita, so far as we have been able to discover, spent more than an hour in these labors of the toilet, which were to be perceived only by their results. She then, with ill-concealed satisfaction, gave herself the final touch before the looking-glass. At last, at about half-past nine, taking a candle in her hand, she descended to the apartment in which was the *Infant Jesus.* She first lighted the altar candles, which had been extinguished; she saw with something of sorrow that the flowers were drooping; she asked pardon of the sacred Image for neglecting it so long, and, throwing herself on her knees before it, prayed in her solitude with her whole heart, and with that frankness and confidence that a guest inspires who has been so long an inmate of the house. Of a *Jesus of Nazareth* bearing the cross upon his shoulders, and crowned with thorns; of an *Ecce Homo,* insulted and scourged, with a reed for derisive scepter, and his hands bound with a rough cord; of a

Christ Crucified, bleeding and in the last throes of death, Pepita would not have dared to ask what she now asked of a Saviour, still a child, smiling, beautiful, untouched by suffering, and pleasing to the eye. Pepita asked him to leave her Don Luis; not to take him away from her, since he, who was so rich and so well provided with everything, might, without any great sacrifice, deny himself this one of his servants, and give him up to her.

Having completed these preparations, which we may classify as cosmetic, decorative, and religious, Pepita installed herself in the library, and there awaited the arrival of Don Luis with feverish impatience.

Antoñona had acted with prudence in not telling her mistress that Don Luis was coming to see her until a short time before the appointed hour. Even as it was, thanks to the delay of her gallant, poor Pepita, from the moment in which she had finished her prayers and supplications to the *Infant Jesus,* to that in which she beheld Don Luis standing in the library, was a prey to anguish and disquietude.

The visit began in the most grave and ceremonious manner. The customary salutations were mechanically interchanged, and Don Luis, at the invitation of Pepita, seated himself in an easy-chair, without laying aside his hat or cane, and at a short distance from her. Pepita was seated on

the sofa; beside her was a little table on which were some books, and a candle, the light from which illuminated her countenance. On the desk also burned a lamp. Notwithstanding these two lights, however, the apartment, which was large, remained for the greater part in darkness. A large window, which looked out on an inner garden, was open on account of the heat; and although the grating of the window was covered with climbing roses and jasmine, the clear beams of the moon penetrated through the interlaced leaves and flowers, and struggled with the light of the lamp and candle. Through the open window came, too, the distant and confused sounds of the dance at the farmhouse, which was at the other extremity of the garden, the monotonous murmur of the fountain below, and the fragrance of the jasmine and roses that curtained the window, mingled with that of the mignonette, sweet-basil, and other plants that adorned the borders beneath.

There was a long pause—a silence as difficult to maintain as it was to break. Neither of the two interlocutors ventured to speak. The situation was, in truth, embarrassing. They found it as difficult to express themselves then as we find it now to reproduce their words; but there is nothing else for it than to make the effort. Let us allow them to speak for themselves, transcribing their words with exactitude.

IX

"So you have finally condescended to come and take leave of me before your departure," said Pepita; "I had already given up the hope that you would do so."

The part Don Luis had to perform was a serious one; and, besides, in this kind of dialogue, the man, not only if he be a novice, but even when he is old in the business and an expert, is apt to begin with some piece of folly. Let us not too freely condemn Don Luis, therefore, because he began unwisely.

"Your complaint is unjust," he said. "I came here with my father to take leave of you, and, as we had not the pleasure of being received by you, we left cards. We were told that you were somewhat indisposed, and we have sent every day since to inquire about you. We were greatly pleased to learn that you were improving. I hope you are now much better."

"I am almost tempted to say I am no better," answered Pepita, "but, as I see that you have come as the ambassador of your father, and I do not want to distress so excellent a friend, it is but right that I should tell you, that you may repeat it to him, that I am much better now. But it is strange that

you have come alone. Don Pedro must be very much occupied indeed, not to accompany you."

"My father did not accompany me, because he does not know that I have come to see you. I have preferred to come without him, because my farewell must be a serious, a solemn, perhaps a final one, and his would naturally be of a very different character. My father will return to the village in a few weeks; it is possible that I may never return to it, and, if I do, it will be in a very different condition from my present."

Pepita could not restrain herself. The happy future of which she had dreamed vanished into air. Her unalterable resolution to vanquish this man, at whatever cost, the only man she had loved in her life, the only one she felt herself capable of loving, seemed to have been made in vain. She felt herself condemned at twenty years of age, with all her beauty, to perpetual widowhood, to solitude, to an unrequited love—for to love any other man seemed impossible to her.

The character of Pepita, in whom obstacles only strengthened and rekindled her desires, with whom a determination, once taken, carried everything before it until it was fulfilled, showed itself now in all its violence and without restraint. She must conquer, or die in the attempt. Social considerations, the fixed habit of guarding and concealing the feelings, acquired in the great world, which

serve as a restraint to the paroxysms of passion, and which veil in ambiguous phrases and circumlocution the most violent explosion of undisciplined emotion, had no power with Pepita. She had had but little intercourse with the world, she knew no middle way; her only rule of conduct hitherto had been to obey blindly her mother and her husband while they lived, and afterward to command despotically every other human being.

Thus it was that on this occasion Pepita spoke her thoughts and showed herself such as she really was. Her soul, with all the passion it contained, took form in her words; and her words, instead of serving to conceal her thoughts and her feelings, gave them substance. She did not speak as a woman of the world would have spoken, with circumlocutions and attenuations of expression, but with that idyllic frankness with which Chloe spoke to Daphnis, and with the humility and the complete self-abandonment with which the daughter-in-law of Naomi offered herself to Boaz.

"Do you persist in your purpose?" she asked. "Are you sure of your vocation? Are you not afraid of being a bad priest? Don Luis, I am going to make a supreme effort. I am going to forget that I am an uncultured girl; I am going to dispense with all sentiment, and to reason as coldly as if it were concerning the matter most indifferent to me. Things have taken place that may be ex-

plained in two ways; both explanations do you discredit. I will tell you what I think:

"If a woman who, with her coquetries—not very daring ones, in truth—almost without a word, and but a few days after seeing and speaking to you for the first time, has been able to provoke you, to move you to look at her with glances which reveal a profane love, and has even obtained from you such a proof of that love as would be a fault, a sin, in any one, but is so especially in a priest—if this woman be, as she indeed is, a simple country girl, without education, without talent, and without elegance, what may not be feared for you when in great cities you see and converse with other women a thousand times more dangerous? Your head will be turned when you are thrown into the society of the great ladies who dwell in palaces, who tread on soft carpets, who dazzle the eye with their diamonds and pearls, who are clad in silks and laces instead of muslin and cotton, who display their white and well-formed throat instead of covering it with a plebeian and modest handkerchief, who are adepts in all the arts of flirtation, and who, by reason of the very ostentation, luxury, and pomp that surround them, are all the more desirable for being apparently more inaccessible. Yes, these elegant and beautiful women discuss politics, philosophy, religion, and literature; they sing like canaries; they are enveloped, as it were,

in clouds of incense, adoration, and homage, set upon a pedestal of triumphs and of victories, glorified by the prestige of an illustrious name, enthroned in gilded drawing-rooms, or secluded in voluptuous boudoirs; and there enter only the blessed ones of the earth, its titled ones, perhaps, who only to their most intimate friends are 'Pepita,' 'Antoñita,' or 'Angelita,' and to the rest of the world, 'Her Grace the Duchess,' or 'The Marchioness.'

"If you have yielded to the arts of a mere country girl when you were on the eve of being ordained, and in spite of all the enthusiasm for your calling that you may naturally be supposed to entertain—if you have thus yielded, urged by a passing impulse, am I not right in foreseeing that you will make an abominable priest, impure, worldly, and of evil influence, and that you will yield to temptation at every step?

"On such a supposition as this, believe me, Don Luis—and do not be offended with me for saying so—you are not even worthy to be the husband of an honest woman. If, with all the ardor and tenderness of the most passionate lover, you have pressed the hand of a woman, if you have looked at one with glances that foretold a heaven, an eternity of love; if you have even kissed a woman who inspired you with no other feeling than one that for me has no name—then go, in God's name, and

do not marry her! If she is virtuous, she will not desire you for a husband, nor even for a lover. But, for God's sake, do not become a priest either! The Church needs men more serious, more capable of resisting temptation, as ministers of the Most High.

"If, on the other hand, you have felt a noble passion for the woman of whom we are speaking, although she be of little worth, why abandon and deceive her so cruelly? However unworthy she may be, if she has inspired this great passion, do you not suppose that she must share it, and be the victim of it? For, when a love is great, elevated, and passionate, does it ever fail to make its power felt? Does it not irresistibly vanquish and subjugate the beloved object? By the extent of your love for her you may measure hers for you. How then can you avoid fearing for her, if you abandon her? Has she the masculine energy, the firmness of character produced by the wisdom learned from books, the attraction of fame, the multitude of splendid projects, and all the resources of your cultured and exalted intellect, to distract her mind, and turn her away without destructive violence, from every other earthly affection? Can you not see that she will die of grief, and that you, called by your destiny to offer up bloodless sacrifices, will begin by pitilessly sacrificing her who most loves you?"

"I too," returned Don Luis, endeavoring to conquer his emotion, and to speak with firmness—"I too am obliged to make a great effort in order to answer you with the calmness necessary to one who opposes argument to argument, as in a controversy; but your accusation is supported by so many reasons and you have invested those reasons—pardon me for saying so—with so specious an appearance of truth, that I have no choice left me but to disprove them by other reasons. I had no thought of being placed in the necessity of maintaining a discussion here, and of sharpening my poor wits for that purpose; but you compel me to do so, unless I wish to pass for a monster. I am going to reply to the two extremes of the cruel dilemma in which you have placed me.

"Though it is true that my youth was passed in my uncle's house and in the seminary, where I saw nothing of women, do not therefore think me so ignorant, or possessed of so little imagination, that I can not picture to myself how lovely, how seductive they may be. My imagination, on the contrary, went far beyond the reality. Excited by the reading of the sacred writers and of profane poets, it pictured women more charming, more graceful, more intelligent, than they are commonly to be found in real life. I knew then, and I even exaggerated to myself, the cost of the sacrifice I was making, when I renounced the love of those women

for the purpose of elevating myself to the dignity of the priesthood. I know well how much the charms of a beautiful woman are enhanced by rich attire, by splendid jewels, by being surrounded with all the arts of refined civilization, all the objects of luxury produced by the indefatigable labor and the skill of man. I knew well, too, how much the natural cleverness of a woman is increased, how much her natural intelligence is sharpened, quickened, and brightened by intercourse with learned men, by the reading of good books, even by the familiar spectacle of the wealth and splendor of great cities, and of the monuments of the past that they contain. All this I pictured to myself with so much vividness, my fancy painted it in such glowing colors, that you need have no doubt that, should I be thrown into the society of those women of whom you speak, far from feeling the adoration and the transports you prophesy, I shall rather experience a disenchantment on seeing how great a distance there is between what I dreamed of and the truth, between the living reality and the picture of it that my fancy drew."

"This is indeed specious reasoning," exclaimed Pepita. "How can I deny that what you have pictured in your imagination is, in truth, more beautiful than what exists in reality? But who will deny, either, that the real possesses a more seductive charm than that which exists only in the

imagination? The vague and ethereal beauty of a phantasm, however great, can not compete with what is palpable and visible to the senses. I can understand that holy images might triumph over worldly dreams, but I fear they would scarcely be able to vanquish worldly realities."

"Have no such fear," returned Don Luis. "My fancy, by its own creations, has more power over my spirit than the whole universe—only excepting yourself—by what it transmits to it through the senses."

"And why except me? Such an exception gives room to another suspicion. The idea you have of me, the idea which you love, may be but the creation of this potent fancy of yours, and an illusion that resembles me in nothing."

"No, this is not the case. You may be assured that this idea resembles you in everything. It may be that it is innate in my soul, that it has existed in it since it was created by God, that it is a part of its essence, the best and purest part of its being, as the perfume is of the flower."

"This is what I had feared, and now you confess it to me. You do not love me. What you love is the essence, the fragrance, the purest part of your own soul, that has assumed a form resembling mine."

"No, Pepita; do not amuse yourself by tormenting me. What I love is you—and you such as you

really are; but what I love is also so beautiful, so pure, so delicate that I can not understand how it should have reached my mind, in a material manner, through the senses. I take it for granted, then, and it is my firm belief, that it must have had an innate existence there. It is like the idea of God which is inborn in my soul, which has unfolded and developed itself within me, and which, nevertheless, has its counterpart in reality, superior, infinitely superior to the idea. As I believe that God exists, so do I believe that you exist, and that you are a thousand times superior to the idea that I have formed of you."

"Still, I have a doubt left. May it not be woman in general, and not I, solely and exclusively, that has awakened this idea?"

"No, Pepita; before I saw you, I had felt in imagination what might be the magic power, the fascination, of a woman beautiful of soul and graceful in person. There is no duchess or marchioness in Madrid, no empress in all the world, no queen or princess on the face of the globe, to be compared to the ideals and fantastic creations with whom I have lived.

"These were inhabitants of the castles and boudoirs, marvels of luxury and taste, that I pleased myself in boyhood by erecting in my fancy, and that I afterward gave as dwelling-places to my Lauras, Beatrices, Juliets, Marguerites, and Leo-

noras; to my Cynthias, Glyceras, and Lesbias. I crowned them in my imagination with coronets and Oriental diadems; I clothed them in mantles of purple and gold, and surrounded them with regal pomp like Esther and Vashti. I endowed them, like Rebecca and the Shulamite, with the bucolic simplicity of the patriarchal age; I bestowed on them the sweet humility and the devotion of Ruth; I listened to them discoursing like Aspasia, or Hypatia, mistresses of eloquence. I enthroned them in luxurious drawing-rooms, and cast over them the splendor of noble blood and illustrious lineage, as if they had been the proudest and noblest of patrician maidens of ancient Rome. I beheld them graceful, coquettish, gay, full of aristocratic ease and manner, like the ladies of the time of Louis XIV, in Versailles; and I adorned them, now with the modest *stola*, inspiring veneration and respect; now with diaphanous tunics and *peplums*, through whose airy folds were revealed all the plastic perfections of their graceful forms; now with the transparent *coa* of the beautiful courtezans of Athens and Corinth, showing the white and roseate hues of the finely molded forms that glowed beneath their vaporous covering.

"But what are the joys of the senses, what the glory and magnificence of the world, to a soul that burns and consumes itself in Divine love, as I believed mine, perhaps with too much arrogance, to

burn and consume itself? As volcanic fires, when they burst into flame, send flying into air, shattered in a thousand fragments, the solid rocks, the mountainside itself, which obstruct their passage, so, or with even greater force, did my spirit cast from itself the whole weight of the universe and of created beauty that lay upon it and imprisoned it, preventing it from soaring up to God, as the centre of its aspirations.

"No; I have rejected no delight, no sweetness, no glory, through ignorance. I knew them all, and valued them all at more than their worth, when I rejected them all for a greater delight, a greater sweetness, a greater glory. The profane love of woman presented itself to my fancy, clothed, not only with all its own charms, but with the sovereign and almost irresistible charms of the most dangerous of all temptations—of that which the moralists call virginal temptation—when the mind, not yet undeceived by experience and by sin, pictures to itself in the transports of love a supreme and ineffable delight immeasurably superior to all reality.

"Ever since I reached manhood—that is to say, for many years past, for my youth was short—I have scorned those delights and that beauty that were but the shadow and the reflex of the archetypal beauty of which I was enamored, of the supreme delight for which I longed. I have sought

to die to myself, in order to live in the beloved object; to free, not only my senses, but even my soul itself, from every earthly affection, from illusions and imaginings, in order to be able to say with truth that it is not I who live, but Christ who lives in me. Sometimes, no doubt, I sinned through arrogance and self-confidence, and God wished to chastise me; you came across my path, and tempted me and led me astray.

"Now you upbraid me, you deride me, you accuse me of levity and weakness; but in upbraiding me and deriding me you insult yourself, for you thus imply that any other woman might have had equal power over me. I do not wish, when I ought to be humble, to fall into the sin of pride, by trying to justify my fault. If God, in chastisement of my pride, has let me fall from His grace, it is possible that any temptation, however slight, might have made me waver and fall. Yet I confess that I do not think so. It may be that I err in my judgment that this is but the consequence of my undisciplined pride, but, I repeat, I do not think so. I can not succeed in persuading myself that the cause of my fall had in it anything either mean or base.

"Above all the dreams of my youthful imagination, the reality, such as I beheld it in you, enthroned itself. You towered above all the nymphs, queens, and goddesses of my fancy. Above the ruins of my ideal creations, overthrown

and shattered by Divine love, there arose in my soul the faithful image, the exact reproduction of the living beauty which adorns and is the essence of that body and of that soul. There may be even something mysterious, something supernatural in this; for I loved you from the moment I first saw you—almost before I saw you. Long before I was conscious of loving you, I loved you. It would seem as if there were some fatality in this—that it was decreed, that it was predestination."

"And if it were predestined, if it be decreed," said Pepita, "why not submit to Fate, why still resist? Sacrifice your purpose to our love. Have not I sacrificed much? Am I not now sacrificing my pride, my modesty, my reserve, in supplicating you thus, in making this effort to overcome your scorn? I too believe that I loved you before I saw you. Now I love you with my whole heart, and without you there is no happiness for me. It is true indeed that in my humble intelligence you can find no rival so powerful as that which I have in yours. Neither with the understanding, nor the will, nor the affections, can I raise myself all at once up to God. Neither by nature nor by grace can I mount, or desire to mount, up to such exalted spheres. My soul, nevertheless, is full of religious devotion, and I know and love and adore God; but I only behold His omnipotence and admire His goodness in the works that have proceeded from

His hands. Nor can I, with the imagination, weave those visions that you tell me of.

"Yet I too dreamed of some one nobler, more intelligent, more poetic, and more enamored than the men who have thus far sought my hand; of a lover more distinguished and accomplished than any of my adorers of this and the neighboring villages, who should love me, and whom I should love and to whose will I should blindly surrender mine. This some one was you. I had a presentiment of it when they told me that you had arrived at the village. When I saw you for the first time, I knew it. But, as my imagination is so sterile, the picture I had formed of you in my mind was not to be compared, even in the most remote degree, to the reality. I too have read something of romances and poetry. But from all that my memory retained of them, I was unable to form a picture that was not far inferior in merit to what I see and divine in you since I have known you. Thus it is that from the moment I saw you I was vanquished and undone.

"If love is, as you say, to die to self, in order to live in the beloved object, then is my love genuine and legitimate, for I have died to myself, and live only in you and for you. I have tried to cast this love away from me, deeming it ill-requited, and I have not been able to succeed in doing so. I have prayed to God with fervor to take away from

me this love, or else to kill me, and God has not deigned to hear me. I have prayed to the Virgin Mary to blot your image from my soul, and my prayer has been in vain. I have made vows to my patron, Saint Joseph, to the end that he would enable me to think of you only as he thought of his blessed spouse, and my patron saint has not succored me.

"Seeing all this, I have had the audacity to ask of Heaven that you should allow yourself to be vanquished, that you should cease to desire to be a priest, that there might spring up in your soul a love as great as that which is in my heart.

"Don Luis, tell me frankly, has Heaven been deaf to this last prayer also? Or is it, perchance, that to subjugate a soul as weak, as wretched, and as petty as mine, a petty love is sufficient, while to master yours, protected and guarded as it is by vigorous and lofty thoughts, a more powerful love than mine is necessary, a love that I am neither worthy of inspiring, nor capable of sharing, nor even able to understand?"

"Pepita," returned Don Luis, "it is not that your soul is less than mine, but that it is free from obligations, and mine is not. The love you have inspired me with is profound, but my obligations, my vows, the purpose of my whole life so near to its realization, contend against it. Why should I not

say it without fearing to offend you? If you succeed in making me love you, you do not humiliate yourself. If I succumb to your love, I both humiliate and abase myself. I leave the Creator for the creature. I renounce the unwavering purpose of my life, I break the image of Christ that was in my soul; and the new man, which I had created in myself at such cost, disappears, that the old man may come to life again. Instead of my lowering myself to the earth, to the impurity of the world that I have hitherto despised, why do not you rather elevate yourself to me by virtue of that very love you entertain for me, freeing it from every earthly alloy? Why should we not love each other without shame, and without sin, and without dishonor? God penetrates holy souls with the pure and refulgent fire of His love, and so fills them with it that, as metal fresh from the forge, without ceasing to be a metal, shines and glitters and is all fire, these souls are filled with joy, and see God, in all things penetrated by God in every part, through the grace of the Divine love. These souls love and enjoy each other, as if they loved and enjoyed God, loving and enjoying Him in truth because they are God. Let us mount together in spirit this steep and mystical ladder. Let our souls ascend, side by side, to this bliss, which even in this mortal life is possible! But to do this we must separate in the body; it is essential that I should go whither I am

called by my duty, my vow, and the voice of the Most High, who disposes of His servant, and has destined him to the service of His altar."

"Ah, Don Luis," replied Pepita, full of sorrow and contrition, "now indeed I see how vile is the metal I am made of, and how unworthy I am that the Divine fire should penetrate and transform me. I will confess everything, casting away even shame.

"I am a vile sinner; my rude and uncultured understanding can not grasp these subtleties, these distinctions, these refinements of love. My rebellious will refuses what you propose. I can not even conceive of you but as yourself. For me you are your mouth, your eyes, your dark locks that I desire to caress with my hands; your sweet voice, the pleasing sound of your words that fall upon my ears and charm them through the senses; your whole person, in a word, which charms and seduces me, and through which, and only through which, I perceive the invisible spirit, vague and full of mystery. My stubborn soul, incapable of these mystical raptures, will never be able to follow you to those regions whither you would take it. If you soar up to them, I shall remain alone, abandoned, plunged in the deepest affliction. I prefer to die; I deserve death; I desire it. It may be that after death my soul, loosening or breaking the vile bonds which chain it here, will be able to

understand the love with which you desire we should be united.

"Kill me, then, in order that we may thus love each other; kill me, and my spirit, set free, will follow you whithersoever you may go, and will journey invisible by your side, watching over your steps, contemplating you with rapture, penetrating your most secret thoughts, beholding your soul as it is, without the intervention of the senses.

"But in this life it can not be. I love in you, not only the soul, but the body, and the shadow cast by the body, and the reflection of the body in the mirror and in the water, and the Christian name, and the surname, and the blood, and all that goes to make you such as you are, Don Luis de Vargas; the sound of your voice, your gesture, your gait, and I know not what else besides. I repeat that you must kill me. Kill me without compassion. No, I am not a Christian; I am a material idolater."

Here Pepita made a long pause. Don Luis knew not what to say, and was silent. Tears bathed the cheeks of Pepita, who continued, sobbing:

"I know it; you despise me, and you are right to despise me. By this just contempt you will kill me more surely than with a dagger, and without staining either your hands or your conscience with blood. Farewell! I am about to free you from my odious presence. Farewell forever!"

Having said this, Pepita rose from her seat, and, without looking at Don Luis, her face bathed with tears, beside herself, rushed toward the door that led to the inner apartment. An unconquerable tenderness, a fatal pity, took possession of Don Luis. He feared Pepita would die. He started forward to detain her, but it was too late. Pepita had crossed the threshold. Her form disappeared in the darkness within. Don Luis, impelled by a superhuman power, drawn as by an invisible hand, followed her into the unlighted chamber.

X

THE library remained deserted.

The servants' dance must have already terminated, for the only sound to be heard was the murmur of the fountain in the garden below.

Not even a breath of wind troubled the stillness of the night and the serenity of the air.

The perfume of the flowers and the light of the moon entered softly through the open window. After a long interval, Don Luis made his appearance, emerging from the darkness. Terror was depicted on his countenance, mingled with despair —such despair as Judas may have felt after he had betrayed his Master.

He dropped into a chair, and burying his face in his hands, with his elbows resting on his knees, he remained for more than half an hour plunged in a sea of bitter reflections.

To see him thus, one might have supposed that he had just murdered Pepita.

Pepita, nevertheless, at last made her appearance. With a slow step, and an air of the deepest melancholy, with bent head, and eyes directed to the floor, she approached Don Luis, and spoke.

"Now, indeed," said she, "though, alas! too late, I know all the vileness of my heart and the iniquity

of my conduct. I have nothing to say in my own defense, but I would not have you think me more wicked than I am. You must not think I have used any arts—that I have laid any plans for your destruction. Yes; it is true that I have been guilty of an atrocious crime, but an unpremeditated one; a crime inspired, perhaps, by the spirit of evil that possesses me. Do not abandon yourself to despair, do not torture yourself, for God's sake! You are responsible for nothing. It was a frenzy, a madness, that took possession of your noble spirit. Your sin is a light one; mine is flagrant, shameful, horrible. Now I am less worthy of you than ever. It is I who now ask you to leave this place. Go; do penance. God will pardon you. Go; a priest will give you absolution. Once cleansed from sin, carry out your purpose, and become a minister of the Most High. Then, through the holiness of your life, through your ceaseless labors, not only will you efface from your soul the last traces of this fall, but you will obtain for me, when you have pardoned me the evil I have done you, the pardon of Heaven also. You are bound to me by no tie, and even if you were I should loosen or break it. You are free. Let it suffice me that I have taken captive by surprise the star of the morning. It is not my desire—I neither can nor ought to seek to keep him in my power. I divine it, I read it in your manner, I am convinced of it—you despise

me more than before. And you are right in despising me; there is neither honor, nor virtue, nor shame in me!"

When she had thus spoken, Pepita, throwing herself on her knees, bowed her face till her forehead touched the floor. Don Luis continued in the same attitude as before. Thus, for some moments, they remained both silent with the silence of despair.

In a stifled voice, and without raising her face from the floor, Pepita after a time continued:

"Go, now, Don Luis, and do not, through an insulting pity, remain any longer at the side of so despicable a wretch as I. I shall have courage to bear your indifference, your forgetfulness, your contempt, for I have deserved them all. I shall always be your slave—but far from you, very far from you, in order that nothing may recall to your memory the infamy of this night!"

Pepita's voice, as she ended, was choked with sobs.

Don Luis could restrain himself no longer. He arose, approached Pepita, and, raising her in his arms from the floor, pressed her to his heart; then, putting aside from her face the blond tresses that fell in disorder over it, he covered it with passionate kisses.

"Soul of my soul," he said at last, "life of my life, treasure of my heart, light of my eyes, raise

your dejected brow, and do not prostrate yourself any longer before me. The sinner, the vile wretch, he who has shown himself weak of purpose, who has made himself the butt of scorn and ridicule, is I, not you. Angels and devils alike must laugh at me and mock me. I have clothed myself with a false sanctity. I was not able to resist temptation, and to undeceive you in the beginning, as would have been right, and now I am equally unable to show myself a gentleman, a man of honor, or a tender lover who knows how to value the favors of his mistress. I can not understand what it was you saw in me to attract you. There never was in me any solid virtue—nothing but vain show and the pedantry of a student who has read pious books as one reads a novel, and on this foundation has based his foolish romance of a future devoted to converting the heathen and to solemn meditations. If there had been any real virtue in me I should have undeceived you in time, and neither you nor I would have sinned. True goodness is not so easily vanquished. Notwithstanding your beauty, notwithstanding your intelligence, notwithstanding your love for me, I should not have fallen if I had been really good. God, to whom all things are possible, would have bestowed His grace upon me. It would have needed nothing less than a miracle, or some other supernatural event, to have enabled me to resist your love, but God would have

wrought the miracle, if I had been worthy of it and there was a motive sufficient for its being wrought. You are wrong to counsel me to become a priest. I know my own unworthiness. It was only pride that actuated me. It was a worldly ambition, like any other. What do I say—like any other? It was worse than any other; it was hypocritical, sacrilegious, simoniacal."

"Do not judge yourself so harshly," said Pepita, now more tranquil, and smiling through her tears. "I do not want you to judge yourself thus, not even for the purpose of making me appear less unworthy to be your companion. No; I would have you choose me through love—freely; not to repair a fault, not because you have fallen into the snare you perhaps think I have perfidiously spread for you. If you do not love me, if you distrust me, if you do not esteem me—then go. My lips shall not breathe a single complaint if you abandon me forever, and never think of me again."

To answer this fittingly, our poor and beggarly human speech was insufficient for Don Luis. He cut short Pepita's words by pressing his lips to hers, and again clasping her to his heart.

XI

SOME time afterward, with much previous coughing and shuffling of the feet, Antoñona entered the library with the words:

"What a long talk you must have had! The sermon our student has been preaching this time can not have been that of the *seven words*—it came very near being that of the *forty hours*. It is time you should go now, Don Luis; it is almost two o'clock in the morning."

"Very well," answered Pepita; "he will go directly."

Antoñona left the library again, and waited outside.

Pepita was like one transformed. One might suppose that the joys she had missed in her childhood, the happiness and contentment she had failed to taste in her early youth, the gay activity and sprightliness that a harsh mother and an old husband had repressed, and, as it were, crushed within her, had suddenly burst into life in her soul, like the green leaves of the trees, whose germination has been retarded by the snows and frosts of a long and severe winter.

A town-bred lady, familiar with what we call social conventionalities, may find something

strange, and even worthy of censure, in what I am about to relate of Pepita. But Pepita, although refined by instinct, was a being in whom every feeling was spontaneous, and in whose nature there was no room for the affected sedateness and circumspection that are customary in the great world. Thus it was that, seeing the obstacles removed that had stood in the way of her happiness, and Don Luis conquered, holding his voluntary promise that he would make her his wife, and believing herself, with justice, to be loved—nay, worshiped—by him whom she too loved and worshiped, she danced and laughed, and gave way to other manifestations of joy that had in them, after all, something childlike and innocent.

But it was necessary that Don Luis should now depart. Pepita took a comb and smoothed his hair lovingly, and kissed him. She then rearranged his necktie.

"Farewell, lord of my life," she said, "dear sovereign of my soul. I will tell your father everything if you fear to do so. He is kind, and he will forgive us."

At last the lovers separated.

When Pepita found herself alone, her restless gaiety disappeared, and her countenance assumed a grave and thoughtful expression.

Two thoughts now presented themselves to her mind, both equally serious; the one possessing a

merely mundane interest, the other an interest of a higher nature. The first thought was that her conduct to-night—the delirium of passion once past—might prejudice her in the opinion of Don Luis; but, finding after a severe examination of her conscience, that neither premeditation nor artifice had had any part in her actions, which were the offspring of an irresistible love, and of impulses noble in themselves, she came to the conclusion that Don Luis could not despise her for it, and she therefore made her mind easy on that point.

Nevertheless, although her frank confession that she was unable to comprehend a love that was purely spiritual, and her taking refuge afterward in her chamber—without foreseeing consequences—were both the result of an impulse innocent enough in itself, Pepita did not seek to deny in her own mind that she had sinned against God, and on this point she could find for herself no excuse. She commended herself, with all her heart, therefore, to the Virgin, entreating her forgiveness. She vowed to the image of Our Lady of Solitude, in the convent of the nuns, seven beautiful golden swords of the finest and most elaborate workmanship, to adorn her breast, and determined to go to confess herself on the following day to the vicar, and to submit herself to the harshest penance he should choose to impose upon her, in order to

merit the absolution of those sins by means of which she had vanquished the obstinacy of Don Luis, who, but for them, would without a doubt have become a priest.

While Pepita was engaged in these reflections, and while she was arranging with so much discretion the affairs of her soul, Don Luis had descended to the hall below, accompanied by Antoñona.

Before taking his leave, Don Luis, without preface or circumlocution, spoke thus:

"Antoñona, tell me, you who are acquainted with everything, who is the Count of Genazahar, and what has he had to do with your mistress?"

"You begin to be jealous very soon."

"It is not jealousy that makes me ask this; it is simply curiosity."

"So much the better. There is nothing more tiresome than jealousy. Well, I will try to satisfy your curiosity. This same Count has given room enough for talk. He is a dissipated fellow, a gambler, and a man of no principle whatever, but he has more vanity than Don Roderick on the gallows. He made up his mind that my mistress should fall in love with him and marry him, and as she has refused him a thousand times he is mad with rage. This does not prevent him, however, from keeping in his money chest more than a thousand piastres that Don Gumersindo lent him years ago, without

any more security than a bit of paper, through the fault and at the entreaty of Pepita, who is better than bread. The fool of a Count thought, no doubt, that Pepita, who was so good to him when a wife that she persuaded her husband to lend him money, would be so much better to him as a widow that she would consent to marry him. He was soon undeceived, however, and then he became furious."

"Good-by, Antoñona," said Don Luis, as he left the house, grave and thoughtful.

The lights of the shops and of the booths in the fair were now extinguished, and every one was going home to bed, with the exception of the owners of the toy-shops and other poor hucksters, who slept beside their wares in the open air.

Under some of the grated windows were still to be seen lovers, wrapped in their cloaks, and chatting with their sweethearts. Almost every one else had disappeared.

Don Luis, once out of sight of Antoñona, gave a loose rein to his thoughts. His resolution was taken, and all his reflections tended to confirm this resolution. The sincerity and ardor of the passion with which he had inspired Pepita, her beauty, the youthful grace of her person, and the fresh exuberance of her soul, presented themselves to his imagination and made him happy.

Notwithstanding this, however, he could not but

reflect, with mortified vanity, on the change that had been wrought in himself. What would the dean think? How great would be the horror of the bishop! And, above all, how serious were the grounds for complaint he had given his father! The displeasure of the latter, his anger when he should know of the bond which united his son to Pepita, caused him infinite disquietude.

As for what—before he fell—he had called his fall, it must be confessed that, after he had fallen, it did not seem to him either so very serious or so very reprehensible. His spiritual-mindedness, viewed in the light that had just dawned upon him, he fancied to have had neither reality nor consistency; to have been but the vain and artificial product of his reading, of his boyish arrogance, of his aimless softness in the innocent days of his college life. When he remembered that he had at times thought himself the recipient of supernatural gifts and graces, had heard mystic whisperings, had held spiritual communion with superior beings; when he remembered that he had fancied himself almost beginning to tread the path that leads to spiritual union, through contemplation of the Divine, penetrating into the recesses of the soul, and mounting up to the region of pure intelligence, he smiled to himself, and began to suspect that during the period in question he had not been altogether in his right mind.

It had all been simply the result of his own arrogance. He had neither done penance, nor passed long years in meditation; he did not possess, nor had he ever possessed, sufficient merits for God to favor him with such privileges as these. The greatest proof he could give himself of the truth of this, the greatest certainty he could possess that the supernatural favors he had enjoyed were spurious, mere recollections of the authors he had read, was that not one of them had ever given him the rapture of Pepita's "I love you," or of the soft touch of her hand caressing his dark locks.

Don Luis had recourse to another species of Christian humility, to justify in his eyes what he now no longer called his fall, but his change of purpose. He confessed himself unworthy to be a priest. He reconciled himself to becoming a commonplace married man, a good sort of country gentleman, like any other, taking care of his vines and olives, and bringing up his children—for he now desired to have children—and to being a model husband at the side of his Pepita.

XII

HERE again I think myself under the necessity—responsible as I am for the publication and disclosure of this history—of interpolating various reflections and explanations of my own.

I said at the beginning of the story that I was inclined to think that the narrative part, called *paralipomena,* was composed by the reverend Dean for the purpose of completing the story and supplying incidents not related in the letters; but I had not at that time read the manuscript with attention. Now, on observing the freedom with which certain matters are treated, and the indulgence with which certain frailties are regarded by the author, I am compelled to ask whether the reverend Dean, with the severity of whose morals I am well acquainted, would have spent his time in writing what we have just read.

There are not sufficient grounds, however, for denying positively that the reverend Dean was the author of these *paralipomena.* The question, therefore, may still be left in doubt, as in substance they contain nothing opposed to Catholic doctrine or to Christian morality. On the contrary, if we examine them carefully, we shall see that they contain a lesson to pride and arrogance in the person

of Don Luis. This history might easily serve as an appendix to the "Spiritual Disillusions" of Father Arbiol.

As for the opinion entertained by two or three ingenious friends of mine, that the reverend Dean, if he were the author, would have used a different style in his narration, saying "my nephew" in speaking of Don Luis, and interposing, from time to time, moral reflections of his own, I do not think it an argument of any great weight. The reverend Dean proposed to himself to tell what had taken place, without seeking to prove any thesis, and he acted with judgment in narrating things as they were, without analyzing motives or moralizing.

He did not do ill either, in my opinion, in concealing his personality, and in avoiding the use of the word *I*, which is a proof, not only of his humility and modesty, but of his literary taste also; for the epic poets and historians, who should serve us as models, do not say *I*, even when speaking of themselves or when they are the heroes of the events they relate. The Athenian Xenophon, to cite an instance, does not say *I* in his "Anabasis," but speaks of himself, when necessary, in the third person, as if the historian of those exploits were one person and the hero of them another. And there are whole chapters in which no mention at all is made of Xenophon. Only once, a little be-

fore the famous battle in which the youthful Cyrus met his death, while this prince was reviewing the Greeks and barbarians who formed his army, and when that of his brother Artaxerxes was already near—having been descried on the broad, treeless plain afar off, first as a little white cloud, then as a dark stain, and, finally, clearly and distinctly, while the neighing of the horses, the creaking of the war-chariots armed with formidable scythes, the snorting of the elephants, and the sound of warlike instruments reach the ears, and the glitter of the brass and gold of the weapons irradiated by the sun strike the eyes of the spectators—only at this moment, I repeat, and not before, does Xenophon appear in his own person. Then he emerges from the ranks to speak with Cyrus, and explains to him the cry that ran from Greek to Greek. It was what in our day would correspond to a watch-word, and on that occasion it was "*Jupiter the savior, and victory!*"

The reverend Dean, who was a man of taste and very well versed in the classics, would not be likely to fall into the error of introducing himself into the narrative, and mixing himself up with it, under the pretext of being the uncle or tutor of the hero, and of vexing the reader by coming out at every step, slightly difficult or slippery, with a "Stop there!" or, "What are you about to do?" or, "Take care you do not fall, unhappy boy!" or other warn-

ings of a like sort. Not to open his lips, on the other hand, or manifest disapprobation in any way whatever, he being present at least in spirit, would, in the case of some of the incidents related, have been but little becoming. In view of these facts, the reverend Dean, with the discretion which was characteristic of him, may possibly have composed the *paralipomena* without disclosing his identity to the reader. This much is certain, however: he added notes and comments of an edifying and profitable character, where such and such a passage seemed to require them. But these I have suppressed, for the reason that notes and comments are now out of fashion, and because this book would become unduly voluminous if it were printed with these additions.

I shall insert here, however, in the body of the text, the comment of the reverend Dean on the rapid transformation of Don Luis from spiritual-mindedness to the reverse, as it is curious, and throws much light on the whole matter.

"This change of purpose of my nephew," he says, "does not disappoint me. I foresaw it from the time he wrote me his first letters. I was deceived in regard to Luisito in the beginning. I believed him to have a true religious call, but I soon recognized the fact that his was a vain, poetic spirit. Mysticism was the form his poetic

imaginings took, only until a more seductive form presented itself.

"Praised be God, who has willed that Luisito should be undeceived in time! He would have made but a bad priest if Pepita Jiménez had not so opportunely presented herself. His very impatience to attain to perfection at a single bound would have caused me to suspect something if I had not been blinded by the affection of an uncle. What! are the favors of Heaven thus obtained all at once? Is it only necessary to present one's self in order to triumph? A friend of mine, a naval officer, used to relate that, when he was in certain cities of America, being then very young, he sought to gain favor with the ladies with too much precipitation, and that they would say to him in their languid American accent: 'You have only just presented yourself, and you already want to be loved. Do something to deserve it, if you can.' If these ladies answered thus, what answer will not Heaven give to those who hope to gain it without merit, and in the twinkling of an eye?

"Many efforts must be made, much purification is needed, much penance must be done, in order to begin to stand well in the sight of God and to enjoy His favors. Even in those vain and false philosophies that have in them anything of mysticism, no supernatural gift or grace is received without a powerful effort and a costly sacrifice. Iambli-

chus was not given power to evoke the genii, and cause them to emerge from the fountain of Gadara, without first spending days and nights in study, and mortifying the body with privations and abstinences. Apollonius of Tyana is thought to have mortified himself severely before performing his false miracles. And in our own day the Krausists, who behold God, as they affirm, with corporeal vision, are forced to read and learn beforehand the whole "Analytics" of Sanz del Rio, which is a much harder task and a greater proof of patience and endurance than to flagellate the body until it looks like a ripe fig. My nephew desired, without effort or merit, to be a perfect man, and—see how it has ended!

"The important thing now is that he shall make a good husband, and that, since he is unsuited for great things, he may be fit for smaller ones—for domestic life, and to make Pepita happy, whose own fault, after all, is to have fallen madly in love with him, with all the innocence and violence of an untamed creature."

Thus far the comments of the reverend Dean, written with easy familiarity, as if for himself alone; for the good man was far from suspecting that I would play him the trick of giving them to the public.

XIII

DON LUIS, in the middle of the street, at two o'clock in the morning, was occupied with the thought, as we have said, that his life, which until now, he had dreamed might be worthy of the "Golden Legend," was about to be converted into a sweet and perpetual idyl. He had not been able to resist the lures of earthly passion. He had failed to imitate the example set by so many saints, among others by St. Vincent Ferrer with regard to a certain dissolute lady of Valencia; though, indeed the cases were dissimilar. For if to flee from the diabolical courtezan in question was an act of heroic virtue in St. Vincent, to flee from the self-abandonment, the ingenuousness, and the humility of Pepita would in him have been something as monstrous and cruel as if, when Ruth lay down at the feet of Boaz, saying to him, "I am thy handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid," Boaz had given her a blow and sent her about her business! Don Luis, then, when Pepita surrendered herself to him, was obliged to follow the example of Boaz, and exclaim: "Daughter, blessed be thou of the Lord; thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning."

Thus did Don Luis justify himself in not following the example of St. Vincent, and other saints no less churlish. As for the ill success of the design he had entertained of imitating St. Edward, he tried to justify and excuse that also. St. Edward married for reasons of state, and without entertaining any affection for Queen Edith; but in his case and in that of Pepita Jiménez there were no reasons of state, but only tender love on both sides.

Don Luis, however, did not deny to himself—and this imparted to his present happiness a slight tinge of melancholy—that he had proved false to his ideal; that he had been vanquished in the conflict. Those who have no ideal, who have never had an ideal, would not distress themselves on this account. Don Luis did distress himself; but he presently came to the conclusion that he would substitute a more humble and easily attained ideal for his former exalted one. And although the recollection of Don Quixote's resolution to turn shepherd, on being vanquished by the Knight of the White Moon, here crossed his mind with ludicrous appositeness, he was in no way daunted by it. He thought, in union with Pepita Jiménez, to renew, in our prosaic and unbelieving time, the golden age, and to repeat the pious example of Philemon and Baucis, creating a model of patriarchal life in these pleasant fields, founding in the place where

he was born a home presided over by religion, that should be at once the asylum of the needy, the centre of culture and friendly conviviality, and the clear mirror in which the domestic virtues should be reflected; joining in one, finally, conjugal love and the love of God, in order that God might sanctify and be present in their dwelling, making it the temple in which both should be His ministers, until by the will of Heaven they should be called to a better life.

Two obstacles must first be removed, however, before all this could be realized, and Don Luis began to consider with himself how he might best remove them.

The one was the displeasure, perhaps the anger, of his father, whom he had defrauded of his dearest hopes. The other was of a very different and, in a certain sense, of a much more serious character. Don Luis, while he entertained the purpose of becoming a priest, was right in defending Pepita from the gross insults of the Count of Genazahar by the weapons of argument only, and in taking no vengeance for the scorn and contempt with which those arguments were listened to. But having now determined to lay aside the cassock, and obliged, as he was, to declare immediately that he was betrothed to Pepita and was going to marry her, Don Luis, notwithstanding his peaceable disposition, his dreams of human brotherhood, and his religious

belief, all of which remained intact in his soul, and all of which were alike opposed to violent measures, could not succeed in reconciling it with his dignity to refrain from breaking the head of the insolent Count. He knew well that dueling is a barbarous practise, that Pepita had no need of the blood of the Count to wash from her name the stain of calumny, and even that the Count himself had uttered the insults he had uttered, not because he believed them, nor perhaps through an excess of hatred, but through stupidity and want of breeding. Notwithstanding all these reflections, however, Don Luis was conscious that he would never again be able to respect himself, and, as a consequence, would never be able to perform to his taste the part of Philemon, if he did not begin with that of Fierabras, by giving the Count his deserts, asking God, meantime, never to place him in a similar position again.

This matter, then, being decided upon, he resolved to bring it to an end as soon as possible. And as it appeared to him that it would be inexpedient, as well as in bad taste, to arrange the affair through seconds, and thus make the honor of Pepita a subject of common talk, he determined to provoke a quarrel with the Count under some other pretext.

Thinking that the Count, being a stranger in the village and a confirmed gambler, might possibly

be still engaged at play in the club-house, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, Don Luis went straight there.

The club-house was still open, but both in the courtyard and the parlor the lights were nearly all extinguished. In one apartment only was there still a light. Thither Don Luis directed his steps, and on reaching it, he saw through the open door the Count of Genazahar engaged in playing *monte,* in which he acted as banker. Only five other persons were playing; two were strangers like the Count; the others were the captain of cavalry in charge of the remount, Currito, and the doctor. Things could not have been better arranged to suit the purpose of Don Luis. So engrossed were the players in their game that they did not observe him, who, as soon as he saw the Count, left the club-house and went rapidly homeward.

On reaching his house the door was opened for him by a servant. Don Luis inquired for his father, and finding that he was asleep, procured a light and went up to his own room, taking care to make no noise lest he should disturb him. There he took about a hundred and fifty piastres in gold that he had laid by, and put them in his pocket. He then called the servant to open the door for him again, and returned to the club-house.

Arrived there, Don Luis noisily entered the parlor in which the players were, comporting himself

with an assumed foppish swagger. The players were struck with amazement at seeing him.

"You here at this hour!" said Currito.

"Where do you come from, little priest?" said the doctor.

"Have you come to preach me another sermon?" cried the Count.

"I have done with sermons," returned Don Luis, calmly. "The bad success of the last one I preached has clearly convinced me that God does not call me to that path in life, and I have chosen another. You, Count, have wrought my conversion. I have thrown aside the cassock. I have come here for amusement; I am in the flower of my youth, and I want to enjoy it."

"Come, I am glad of that," returned the Count; "but take care, my lad, for if the flower be a delicate one, it may wither and drop its leaves before their time."

"I shall take care of that," returned Don Luis. "I see you are playing, and I too feel like trying my luck. Do you know, Count, I think it would be amusing if I could break your bank?"

"You think it would be amusing, eh? You have been dining liberally!"

"I have dined as I pleased."

"The youngster is learning to answer back."

"I learn what it is my pleasure to learn."

"Damnation!" cried the Count; and the storm

was about to burst when the captain, interposing, succeeded in reestablishing the peace.

"Come," said the Count when he had recovered his temper, "out with your cash, and try your luck."

Don Luis seated himself at the table, and took out all his gold. At sight of it the Count regained his serenity completely, for it must have exceeded in amount the sum he had in the bank, and he thought he should at once win it of this novice.

"There is no need to cudgel one's brains much in this game," said Don Luis to the Count; "I think I understand it already. I put money on a card, and if the card turns up I win; if not, you win."

"Just so, my young friend; you have a strong intellect."

"And the best of it is that I have not only a strong understanding, but a strong will as well. But though I may have the stubbornness of a donkey, I am not such a donkey as many people in this neighborhood."

"What a witty mood you are in to-night, and how anxious you are to display your wit!"

Don Luis was silent. He played a few deals, and was lucky enough to win almost every time.

The Count began to be annoyed.

"What if the youngster should pluck me?" he said to himself. "Fortune favors the innocent."

While the Count was troubling himself with this

reflection, Don Luis, feeling fatigued, and weary now of the part he was playing, determined to end the matter at once.

"The object of all this," he said, "is to see if I can win all your gold, or if you can win mine. Is it not so, Count?"

"Just so."

"Well, then, why should we remain here all night? It is getting late, and according to your advice I ought to retire early, so that the flower of my youth may not wither before its time."

"How is this? Do you want to go away already? Do you want to back out?"

"I have no desire to back out. Quite the contrary. Currito, tell me, in this heap of gold here is there not already more than there is in the bank?"

Currito looked at the gold and answered:

"Without a doubt."

"How shall I explain," asked Don Luis, "that I wish to stake on one card all that I have here, against what there is in the bank?"

"You do that," responded Currito, "by saying, 'I play *banco!*'"

"Well, then, I play *banco,*" said Don Luis, addressing himself to the Count; "I play *banco* on this king of spades, whose companion will to a certainty turn up before his opponent, the three, does."

The Count, whose whole cash capital was in the bank, began to be alarmed at the risk he ran; but there was nothing for it but to accept.

It is a common saying that those who are fortunate in love are unfortunate at play, but the reverse of this is often more nearly the truth. He who is fortunate in one thing is apt to be fortunate in everything; it is the same when one is unfortunate.

The Count continued to draw cards, but no *three* turned up. His emotion, notwithstanding his efforts to conceal it, was great. Finally, he came to a card which he knew by certain lines at the top to be the king of hearts, and paused.

"Draw," said the captain.

"It is of no use! The king of hearts! Curses on it! The little priest has plucked me. Take up your money."

The Count threw the cards angrily on the table.

Don Luis took up the money calmly, and with apparent indifference.

After a short silence the Count said:

"My little priest, you must give me my revenge."

"I see no such necessity."

"It seems to me that between gentlemen—"

"According to that rule the game would have no end," said Don Luis, "and it would be better to save one's self the trouble of playing altogether."

"Give me my revenge," replied the Count, without paying any attention to this argument.

"Be it so," returned Don Luis; "I wish to be fair."

The Count took up the cards again, and proceeded to deal.

"Stop a moment," said Don Luis; "let us understand each other. Where is the money for your new bank?"

The Count showed signs of confusion and disturbance.

"I have no money here," he returned, "but it seems to me that my word is more than enough."

Don Luis answered, with grave and measured accent:

"Count, I should be quite willing to trust the word of a gentleman, and allow him to remain in my debt, if it were not that in doing so I should fear to lose your friendship, which I am now in a fair way to gain; but as I heard this morning of the cruelty with which you have treated certain friends of mine to whom you are indebted, I do not wish to run the risk of becoming culpable in your eyes by means of the same fault. How ridiculous to suppose that I should voluntarily incur your enmity by lending you money which you would not repay me, as you have not repaid, except with insults, that which you owe Pepita Jiménez!"

From the fact that this accusation was true, the offense was all the greater. The Count became

livid with anger, and, by this time on his feet, ready to come to blows with the collegian.

"You lie, slanderer!" he exclaimed. "I will tear you limb from limb, you—"

This last insult, which reflected on his birth and on the honor of her whose memory was most sacred to him, was never finished; its end never reached the ears of him against whom it was directed. For, with marvelous quickness, dexterity, and force, he reached across the table which was between himself and the Count, and with the light, flexible bamboo cane with which he had armed himself, struck his antagonist on the face, raising on it instantly a livid mark.

There was neither retort, outcry, nor uproar. When the hands come into play, the tongue is apt to be silent. The Count was about to throw himself on Don Luis for the purpose of tearing him to pieces, if it were in his power. But opinion had changed greatly since yesterday morning, and was now on the side of Don Luis. The captain, the doctor, and even Currito, who now showed more courage than he had done on that occasion, all held back the Count, who struggled and fought ferociously to release himself.

"Let me go!" he cried; "let me get at him and kill him!"

"I do not seek to prevent a duel," said the captain; "a duel is inevitable. I only seek to prevent

your fighting here like two porters. I should be wanting in self-respect if I consented to be present at such a combat."

"Let weapons be brought!" said the Count; "I do not wish to defer the affair for a single moment. At once—and here!"

"Will you fight with swords?" said the captain.

"Yes," responded Don Luis.

"Swords be it," said the Count.

All this was said in a low voice, so that nothing might be heard in the street. Even the servants of the club-house, who slept on chairs in the kitchen and in the yard, were not awakened by the noise.

Don Luis chose as his seconds the captain and Currito; the Count chose the two strangers. The doctor made ready to practise his art, and showed the emblem of the Red Cross.

It was not yet daylight. It was agreed that the apartment in which they were should be the field of combat, the door being first closed. The captain went to his house for the swords, and returned soon afterward carrying them under the cloak which he had put on for the purpose of concealing them.

We already know that Don Luis had never wielded a weapon in his life. Fortunately, the Count, although he had never studied theology, or entertained the purpose of becoming a priest, was not much more skilled than he in the art of fence.

The only rules laid down for the duel were that, their swords once in hand, each of the combatants should use his weapon as Heaven might best direct him.

The door of the apartment was closed. The tables and chairs were placed in a corner, to leave a free field for the combatants, and the lights were suitably disposed.

Don Luis and the Count divested themselves of their coats and waistcoats, remaining in their shirt-sleeves, and each selected his weapon. The seconds stood on one side. At a signal from the captain the combat began. Between two persons who know neither how to parry a stroke nor how to put themselves on guard, a combat must of necessity be brief; and it was.

The fury of the Count, restrained for some time past, now burst forth and blinded his reason. He was strong, and he had wrists of steel; and with his sword he showered down on Don Luis a storm of strokes without order or sequence. Four times he succeeded in touching Don Luis—each time, fortunately, with the flat of his weapon. He bruised his shoulders, but did not wound him. The young theologian had need of all his strength to keep from falling to the floor, overcome by the force of the blows and the pains of his bruises. A fifth time the Count hit Don Luis, on the left arm, and this time with the edge of his weapon, although aslant.

The blood began to flow abundantly. Far from stopping, the Count resumed the attack with renewed fury, in the hope of again wounding his antagonist. He almost placed himself under the weapon of Don Luis. The latter, instead of putting himself in position to parry, brought his sword down vigorously on his adversary, and succeeded in wounding the Count in the head. The blood gushed forth, and ran down his forehead and into his eyes. Stunned by the blow, the Count fell heavily to the floor.

The whole combat was a matter of a few seconds. Don Luis had remained tranquil throughout, like a Stoic philosopher who is obliged by the hard law of necessity to take part in a conflict opposed alike to his habits and his ways of thought. But no sooner did he see his antagonist extended on the floor, bathed in blood and looking as though he were dead, than he experienced the most poignant anguish, and feared for a moment that he should faint. He who, until within the last five or six hours, had held unwaveringly to his resolution of being a priest, a missionary, a minister, and a messenger of the Gospel, had committed, or accused himself of having committed, during those few hours, every crime, and of breaking all the commandments of God. There was now no mortal sin by which he was not contaminated. First, his purpose of leading a life of perfect and heroic

holiness had been put to flight; then had followed his purpose of leading a life of holiness of a more easy, commonplace sort. The devil seemed to please himself in overthrowing his plans. He reflected that he could now no longer be even a Christian Philemon, for to lay his neighbor's head open with a stroke of a sabre was not a very good beginning of his idyl.

Don Luis, after all the excitement of the day, was now in a condition resembling that of a man who has brain fever. Currito and the captain, one at each side, took hold of him and led him home.

XIV

DON PEDRO DE VARGAS got out of bed in terror when he was told that his son had come home wounded. He ran to see him, examined his bruises and the wound in his arm, and saw that they were none of them attended with danger; but he broke out into threats of vengeance, and would not be pacified until he was made acquainted with the particulars of the affair, and learned that Don Luis had known how to avenge himself in spite of his theology.

The doctor came soon after to examine the wound, and was of opinion that in three or four days' time Don Luis would be able to go out again as if nothing had happened. With the Count, on the other hand, it would be a matter of months. His life, however, was in no danger. He had returned to consciousness, and had asked to be taken to his own home, which was distant only a league from the village in which these events took place. A hired coach had been procured, and he had been conveyed thither, accompanied by his servant and also by the two strangers who had acted as his seconds.

Four days after the affair the doctor's opinion was justified by the result, and Don Luis, although sore from his bruises and with his wound still un-

healed, was in a condition to go out, and promised a complete recovery within a short time.

The first duty which Don Luis thought himself obliged to fulfil, as soon as he was off the sick list, was to confess to his father his love for Pepita, and his intention of marrying her.

Don Pedro had not gone out to the country, nor had he occupied himself in any other way than in taking care of his son during his sickness. He was constantly at his side, waiting on him and petting him with tender affection.

On the morning of the 27th of June, after the doctor had gone, Don Pedro being alone with his son, the confession, so difficult for Don Luis to make, took place in the following manner:

"Father," said Don Luis, "I ought not to deceive you any longer. To-day I am going to confess my faults to you, and cast away hypocrisy."

"If it is a confession you are about to make, my boy, it would be better for you to send for the reverend vicar. My standard of morality is an indulgent one, and I shall give you absolution for everything, without my absolution being of much value to you, however. But if you wish to confide to me some weighty secret, as to your best friend, begin by all means; I am ready to listen to you."

"What I am about to confess to you is a very serious fault of which I have been guilty; and I am ashamed to—"

"You have no need to be ashamed before your father; speak frankly."

Here Don Luis, growing very red, and with visible confusion, said:

"My secret is, that I am in love with—Pepita Jiménez—and that she—"

Don Pedro interrupted his son with a burst of laughter, and finished the sentence for him:

"And that she is in love with you, and that on the night of St. John's Eve you had a tender meeting with her until two o'clock in the morning, and that, for her sake, you sought a quarrel with the Count of Genazahar, whose head you have broken.

"A pretty secret to confide to me, truly! There isn't a cat or a dog in the village that is not fully acquainted with every detail of the business. The only thing there seemed a possibility of being able to conceal was, that your interview lasted until just two o'clock in the morning; but some gipsy-cake women chanced to see you leave Pepita's house, and did not stop until they had told every living creature in the place of it. Pepita, besides, makes no great effort to conceal the truth, and in this she does well, for that would be only the concealment of Antequera. Since you have been wounded, Pepita comes here twice a day, and sends Antoñona two or three times more to inquire after you; and if they have not come in to see you, it is be-

cause I would not consent to their doing so, lest it should excite you."

The confusion and the distress of Don Luis reached their climax when he heard his father thus compendiously tell the whole story.

"How surprised," he said, "how astounded you must have been!"

"No, my boy, I was neither surprised nor astounded. The matter has been known in the village only for four days, and indeed, to tell the truth, your transformation did create some surprise. 'Oh, the sly-boots! the wolf in sheep's clothing! the hypocrite!' every one exclaimed; 'how we have been deceived in him!' The reverend vicar, above all, is quite bewildered. He is still crossing himself at the thought of how you toiled in the vineyard of the Lord on the night of the 23d and the morning of the 24th, and of the strange character of your labors. But there was nothing in these occurrences to surprise me, except your wound. We old people can hear the grass grow. It is not easy for the chickens to deceive the huckster."

"It is true, I sought to deceive you! I have been a hypocrite!"

"Don't be a fool; I do not say this to blame you. I say it in order to give myself an air of perspicacity. But let us speak with frankness. My boasting is, after all, without foundation. I knew, step

by step, for more than two months past, the progress of your love affair with Pepita; but I know it because your uncle the dean, to whom you were writing all that passed within your mind, has communicated it to me. Listen to your uncle's letter of accusation, and to the answer I gave him, a very important document, of which I have kept the copy."

Don Pedro took some papers from his pocket, and read aloud his brother's letter:

"My dear Brother:

"It grieves me to the heart to be obliged to give you a piece of bad news; but I trust that God will grant you patience and endurance to enable you to hear it without feeling too much anger or bitterness.

"Luisito has been writing me strange letters for some days past, in which he reveals, in the midst of his mystical exaltation, an inclination, earthly and sinful enough, toward a certain widow, charming, mischievous, and coquettish, who lives in your village. Until now I had deceived myself, believing Luisito's call to be a true one; and I flattered myself with giving to the Church of God a wise, virtuous, and exemplary priest. But his letters have dispelled my illusions. Luisito shows himself, in them, to have more of poetry than of true piety in his nature; and the widow, who must be a limb of

Satan, will be able to vanquish him with but a very slight effort. Although I wrote to Luisito admonishing him to flee from temptation, I am already certain that he will fall into it. This ought not to grieve me; for if he is to be false to his vocation, to indulge in gallantries, and to make love, it is better that this evil disposition should reveal itself in time, and that he should not become a priest. I should not, therefore, see any serious objection to Luisito's remaining with you, for the purpose of being tested by the touchstone and analyzed in the crucible of such a love, making the little widow the agent by whose means might be discovered how great is the quantity of the pure gold of his clerical virtues, and how much alloy is mixed with that gold, were it not that we are met by the difficulty that the widow whom we would thus convert into a faithful assayer, is the object of your own addresses, and, it may be, your sweetheart.

"That your son should turn out to be your rival would be too serious a matter. This would be a monstrous scandal, and to avoid it in time I write to you to-day, to the end that, under whatever pretext, you may send or bring Luisito here—the sooner the better."

Don Luis listened in silence, and with his eyes cast down. His father then read him his reply to the dean:

"Dear Brother and Venerable Spiritual Father:

"I return you a thousand thanks for the news you send me, and for your counsel and advice. Although I flatter myself with not being wanting in shrewdness, I confess my stupidity on this occasion; I was blinded by vanity. Pepita Jiménez, from the time that my son arrived here, manifested so much amiability and affection toward me that I began to indulge in pleasing hopes on my own account. Your letter was necessary to undeceive me. I now understand that in making herself so sociable, in showing me so many attentions, and in dancing attendance on me, as she did, this cunning Pepita had in her mind only the father of the smooth-faced theologian. I shall not attempt to conceal from you that, for the moment, this disappointment mortified and distressed me a little; but when I reflected over it with due consideration, my mortification and my distress were converted into joy.

"Luis is an excellent boy. Since he has been with me I have learned to regard him with much greater affection than formerly. I parted from him, and gave him up to you to educate, because my own life was not very exemplary, and, for this and other reasons, he would have grown up a savage here. You went beyond my hopes and even my desires, and almost made a father of the

Church of Luisito. To have a holy son would have flattered my vanity; but I should have been very sorry to remain without an heir to my house and name, who would give me handsome grandchildren, and who after my death would enjoy my wealth, which is my glory, for I acquired it by skill and industry, and not by cunning and trickery. Perhaps the conviction I had that there was no remedy, and that Luis would inevitably go abroad to convert the Chinese, the Indians, or the blacks of the Congo, made me resolve on marrying, so as to provide myself with an heir.

"Naturally enough, I cast my eyes on Pepita Jiménez, who is not, as you imagine, a limb of Satan, but a lovely creature, as innocent as an angel, and ardent in her nature, rather than coquettish. I have so good an opinion of Pepita that, if she were sixteen again, with a domineering mother who tyrannized over her, and if I were eighty, like Don Gumersindo—that is to say, if death were already knocking at the door—I would marry Pepita, that her smile might cheer me on my deathbed, as if my guardian angel had taken human shape in her, and for the purpose of leaving her my position, my fortune, and my name. But Pepita is not sixteen, but twenty; nor is she now in the power of that serpent, her mother; nor am I eighty, but fifty-five. I am at the very worst age, because I begin to feel myself considerably the worse for

wear, with something of asthma, a good deal of cough, rheumatic pains, and other chronic ailments; yet devil a bit do I wish to die, notwithstanding! I believe I shall not die for twenty years to come, and, as I am thirty-five years older than Pepita, you may calculate the miserable future that would await her, tied to an old man who would live forever. At the end of a few years of marriage she would be reduced to hating me, notwithstanding her goodness. Doubtless it is because she is good and wise that she has not chosen to accept me for a husband, notwithstanding the perseverance and the obstinacy with which I have proposed to her.

"How much do I not thank her for this now! Even my self-love, wounded by her scorn, is soothed by the reflection that, if she does not love me, at least she loves one of my blood, is captivated by a son of mine. If this fresh and luxuriant ivy, I say to myself, refuses to twine around the old trunk, worm-eaten already, it climbs by it to reach the new sprout it has put forth—a green and flourishing offshoot. May God bless them both, and make their love prosper!

"Far from bringing the boy back to you, I shall keep him here—by force, if it be necessary. I have determined to oppose his entering the priesthood. I dream already of seeing him married. I shall grow young again contemplating the handsome

pair joined together by love. And how will it be when they shall have given me a family of grandchildren? Instead of going as a missionary, and bringing back to me from Australia, or Madagascar, or India, neophytes black as soot, with lips the size of your hand, or yellow as deerskin, and with eyes like owls, will it not be better for Luisito to preach the Gospel in his own house, and to give me a series of little catechumens, fair, rosy, with eyes like those of Pepita, who will resemble cherubim without wings? The catechumens he would bring me from those foreign lands I should have to keep at a respectful distance, in order not to be overpowered by their odor; while those I speak of would seem to me like roses of Paradise, and would come to climb up on my knees, and would call me grandpapa, and with their little hands pat the bald spot I am beginning to acquire.

"When I was in all my vigor I had no particular longing for domestic joys; but now that I am approaching old age, if I have not already entered on it, as I have no intention of turning monk, I please myself in thinking that I shall play the part of a patriarch. And do not imagine, either, that I am going to leave it to time to bring this young engagement to a happy close. No! I shall myself set to work to do this.'

"Continuing your comparison, since you speak of Pepita as a crucible and Luis as a metal, I shall

find, or rather I have found already, a bellows, or blow-pipe, very well adapted to kindle up the fire, so that the metal may melt in it the more quickly. Antoñona has an understanding with me already, and through her I know that Pepita is over head and ears in love.

"We have agreed that I shall continue to seem blind to everything, and to know nothing of what passes. The reverend vicar, who is a simple soul, always in the clouds, helps me as much as Antoñona does, or more, and without knowing it, because he repeats to Pepita everything Luis says to him, and everything Pepita says to Luis; so that this excellent man, with the weight of half a century in each foot, has been converted—oh, miracle of love and of innocence!—into a carrier-dove by which the two lovers send each other their flatteries and endearments, while they are as ignorant as he is of the fact.

"So powerful a combination of natural and artificial methods ought to give an infallible result. You will be made acquainted with this result when I give you notice of the wedding, so that you may come to perform the ceremony, or else send the lovers your blessing and a handsome present."

With these words Don Pedro finished the reading of his letter; and on looking again at Don Luis

he saw that he had been listening to him with his eyes full of tears.

Father and son united in a long and close embrace.

Just a month from the date of this interview the wedding of Don Luis de Vargas and Pepita Jiménez took place.

The reverend Dean—fearing the ridicule of his brother at the spiritual-mindedness of Don Luis having thus come to naught, and recognizing also that he would not play a very dignified part in the village, where every one would say he was a poor hand at turning out saints—declined to be present, excusing himself on the ground of being too busy, although he sent his blessing, and a magnificent pair of earrings as a present for Pepita.

The reverend vicar, therefore, had the pleasure of marrying her to Don Luis.

The bride, elegantly attired, was thought lovely by every one, and was looked upon as a good exchange for the hair shirt and the scourge.

That night Don Pedro gave a magnificent ball in the courtyard of his house and the contiguous apartments. Servants and gentlemen, nobles and laborers, ladies and country-girls were present, and mingled together as if it were the ideal golden age—though why called golden I know not. Four skilful, or, if not skilful, at least indefatigable, guitar-players played a fandango; two gipsies, a

man and a woman, both famous singers, sang verses of a tender character and appropriate to the occasion; and the schoolmaster read an epithalamium in heroic verse.

There were tarts, fritters, jumbles, gingerbread, sponge-cake, and wine in abundance for the common people. The gentry regaled themselves with refreshments—chocolate, lemonade, honey, and various kinds of aromatic and delicate cordials.

Don Pedro was like a boy—sprightly, gallant, and full of jests. It did not look as if there were much truth in what he had said in his letter to the Dean in regard to his rheumatism and other ailments. He danced the fandango with Pepita, as also with the most attractive among her maids, and with six or seven of the village girls. He gave each of them, on reconducting her, tired out, to her seat, the prescribed embrace, and to the least demure a couple of pinches, though this latter forms no part of the ceremonial. He carried his gallantry to the extreme of dancing with Doña Casilda, who could not refuse him, and who, with her two hundred and fifty pounds of humanity, and the heat of July, perspired at every pore. Finally, Don Pedro stuffed Currito so full, and made him drink so often to the health of the newly married pair, that the muleteer Dientes was obliged to carry him home to sleep off the effect of his excesses, slung like a wine-skin across the back of an ass!

The ball lasted until three in the morning; but the young couple discreetly disappeared before eleven, and retired to the house of Pepita.

Although it is the unfailing use and custom of the village to treat every widow or widower who marries again to a terrible *charivari*—that particularly noisy kind of mock serenade—leaving them not a moment's rest from the cow-bells during the first night of marriage, Pepita was such a favorite, Don Pedro was so much respected, and Don Luis was so beloved, that there were no bells on this occasion, nor was there the least attempt made at ringing them—a singular circumstance, which is recorded as such in the annals of the village.

PART III

LETTERS OF MY BROTHER

THE history of Pepita and Luisito should, properly speaking, end here. This epilogue is not necessary to the story, but, as it formed part of the bundle of papers left at his death by the reverend Dean, although we refrain from publishing it entire, we shall at least give samples of it.

No one can entertain the least doubt that Don Luis and Pepita, united by an irresistible love, almost of the same age—she beautiful, he brave and handsome, both intelligent and full of goodness—would enjoy, during a long life, as much peace and happiness as falls to the lot of mortals. And this supposition, which for those who have read the preceding narrative is a logically drawn deduction from it, is converted into a certainty for him who reads the epilogue.

The epilogue gives, besides, some information respecting the secondary personages of the narrative, in whose fate the reader may possibly be interested. It consists of a collection of letters addressed by Don Pedro de Vargas to his brother the Dean, dating from the day of his son's marriage to four years later.

Without prefixing the dates, although following their chronological order, we shall transcribe here a few short extracts from these letters, and thus bring our task to an end:

Luis manifests the most lively gratitude toward Antoñona, without whose services he would not now possess Pepita. But this woman, the accomplice of the sole fault of which either he or Pepita had been guilty in their lives, living as she did on the most familiar footing in the house, and fully acquainted with all that had taken place, could not but be in the way. To get rid of her, then, and at the same time to do her a service, Luis set to work to bring about a reconciliation between her and her husband, whose daily fits of drunkenness she had refused to put up with. The son of Master Cencias gave his promise that he would get *hardly ever* drunk; but he would not venture on an absolute and uncompromising *never*. Confiding in this half-promise, however, Antoñona consented to return to the conjugal roof. Husband and wife being thus reunited, it occurred to Luis that a homeopathic principle of treatment might prove efficacious with the son of Master Cencias in curing him radically of his vice; for having heard it affirmed that confectioners detest sweets, he concluded that, on the same principle, tavern-keepers ought to detest spirits, and he sent Antoñona and her husband

to the capital of the province, where at his own cost he set them up in a fine tavern. Both live there together happily; they have succeeded in obtaining many patrons, and will probably become rich. He still gets drunk occasionally; but Antoñona, who is the stronger of the two, is accustomed at such times to give him a good trouncing, to help on his cure.

Currito, anxious to imitate his cousin, whom he admires more and more every day, and seeing and enjoying the domestic felicity of Pepita and Luis, made haste to find a sweetheart, and married the daughter of a rich farmer of the place, healthy, fresh, red as a poppy, and who promises soon to acquire proportions as ample as those of her mother-in-law Casilda.

The Count of Genazahar, after being confined to his bed for five months, is now cured of his wound, and, it is said, is very much improved in manners. He paid Pepita, a short time ago, more than half of his debt to her, and asks for a respite in the payment of the remainder.

We have had a very great grief, although one that we had foreseen for some time past. The father vicar, yielding to the advance of years, has passed to a better life. Pepita remained till the last at his bedside, and closed his eyes with her own beautiful hands. The father vicar died the death of a

blessed servant of the Lord. Rather than death, it seemed a happy transit to serener regions. Nevertheless, Pepita and all of us have mourned him sincerely. He has left behind him only a few piastres and his furniture, for he gave all he had in alms. His death would have made orphans of the poor of the village, if it were not that Pepita still lives.

Every one in the village laments the death of the reverend vicar, and there are many who regard him as a real saint, worthy of religious honors, and who attribute miracles to him. I know not how that may be, but I do know that he was an excellent man, and that he must have gone straight to heaven, where we may hope that he intercedes for us. With all this, his humility, his modesty, and his fear of God were such that he spoke of his sins in the hour of death as if he had in reality committed many, and he besought our prayers to the Lord and to the Virgin Mary for their forgiveness.

A strong impression has been produced on the mind of Luis by the exemplary life and death of this man. He was simple, it must be confessed, and of limited intelligence, but of upright will, ardent faith, and fervent charity. When Luis compares himself with the vicar, he feels humiliated. This has infused into his soul a certain

bitter melancholy; but Pepita, who has a great deal of tact, dissipates it with smiles and caresses.

Everything prospers with us. Luis and I have some wine-vaults, than which there are no better in Spain, if we except those of Xeres. The olive crop of this year has been superb. We can afford to allow ourselves every luxury; and I advise Luis and Pepita to make the tour of Germany, France, and Italy as soon as Pepita is over her trouble, and once more in her usual health. The dear children can afford to spend a few thousand piastres on the expedition, and will bring back some fine books, pieces of furniture, and objects of art, to adorn their dwelling.

We have deferred the baptism for two weeks, in order that it may take place on the first anniversary of the wedding. The child is a marvel of beauty, and is very healthy. I am the godfather, and he has been named after me. I am already dreaming of the time when Periquito shall begin to talk, and amuse us with his prattle.

In order that nothing may be wanting to the prosperity of this tender pair, it turns out now, according to letters received from Havana, that the brother of Pepita, whose evil ways we feared might disgrace the family, is almost—and indeed without an *almost*—about to honor and elevate it by becoming a person of eminence. During all

the time in which we heard nothing from him he has been profiting by his opportunities, and fortune has sent him favoring gales. He obtained another employment in the Custom-house; then he trafficked in negroes; then he failed—an occurrence which for certain business men is like a good pruning for trees, making them sprout again with fresh vigor; and now he is so prosperous that he has formed the resolution of entering the highest circles of the aristocracy, under the title of Marquis or Duke. Pepita is frightened and troubled at this unexpected turn of fortune, but I tell her not to be foolish: if her brother is, and must in any case be, a rascal, is it not better that he should at least be a fortunate one?

We might thus go on making extracts did we not fear to weary the reader. We shall end, then, by copying one of the latest letters:

My children have returned from their travels in good health. Periquito is very mischievous and very charming. Luis and Pepita have come back resolved never again to leave the village, though they should live longer than Philemon and Baucis. They are more in love with each other than ever.

They have brought back with them articles of furniture, a great many books, some pictures, and all sorts of other elegant trifles, purchased in the various countries through which they have trav-

eled, and principally in Paris, Rome, Florence, and Vienna.

The affection they entertain for each other, and the tenderness and cordiality with which they treat each other and every one else, have exercised a beneficent influence on manners here; and the elegance and good taste with which they are now completing the furnishing of their house will go far to make superficial culture take root and spread.

The people in Madrid say that in the country we are stupid and uncouth; but they remain where they are, and never take the trouble to come and reform our manners. On the contrary, no sooner does any one make his appearance in the country who knows or is worth anything, or who thinks he knows or is worth anything, than he makes every possible effort to get away from it, and leaves the fields and provincial towns behind him. Pepita and Luis pursue the opposite course, and I commend them for it with my whole heart. They are gradually improving and beautifying their surroundings, so as to make of this secluded spot a paradise.

Do not imagine, however, that the inclination of Pepita and Luis for material well-being has cooled in the slightest degree their religious feelings. The piety of both grows deeper every day; and in each new pleasure or satisfaction which they enjoy, or which they can procure for their

fellow beings, they see a new benefaction of Heaven, in which they recognize fresh cause for gratitude. More than this, no pleasure or satisfaction would be such, none would be of any worth, or substance, or value in their eyes, were it not for the thought of higher things, and for the firm belief they have in them.

Luis, in the midst of his present happiness, never forgets the overthrow of the ideal he had set up for himself. There are times when his present life seems to him vulgar, selfish, and prosaic, compared with the life of sacrifice, with the spiritual existence to which he believed himself called in the first years of his youth. But Pepita solicitously hastens to dispel his melancholy on such occasions; and then Luis sees and acknowledges that it is possible for man to serve God in every state and condition, and succeeds in reconciling the lively faith and the love of God that fill his soul with this legitimate love of the earthly and perishable. But in the earthly and perishable he beholds the divine principle, as it were, without which, neither in the stars that stud the heavens, nor in the flowers and fruits that beautify the fields, nor in the eyes of Pepita, nor in the innocence and beauty of Periquito, would he behold anything lovely. The greater world, all this magnificent fabric of the universe, he declares, would without its all-seeing God seem to him sublime indeed, but without

order, or beauty, or purpose. And as for the world's epitome, as we are accustomed to call man, neither would he love that were it not for God; and this, not because God commands him to love it, but because the dignity of man, and his title to be loved, have their foundation in God Himself, who not only made the soul of man in His own likeness, but ennobled also his body, making it the living temple of the Spirit, holding communion with it by means of the sacrament, and exalting it to the extreme of uniting with it His incarnate Word. In these and other arguments, which I am unable to set forth here, Luis finds consolation.

He reconciles himself to having relinquished his purpose of leading a life devoted to pious meditations, ecstatic contemplation, and apostolic works, and ceases to feel the sort of generous envy with which the father vicar inspired him on the day of his death; but both he and Pepita continue to give thanks, with great Christian devoutness, for the benefits they enjoy, comprehending that not to their own merit do they owe these benefits, but only to the goodness of God.

And so my children have in their house a couple of apartments resembling beautiful little Catholic chapels or oratories; but I must confess that these chapels have, too, their trace of paganism—an amorous-pastoral-poetic and Arcadian air which is to be seen only beyond city walls.

The orchard of Pepita is no longer an orchard, but a most enchanting garden, with its araucarias and Indian figs, which grow here in the open air, and its well-arranged though small hothouse, full of rare plants.

The room in which we ate the strawberries on the afternoon on which Pepita and Luis saw and spoke with each other for the second time, has been transformed into a graceful temple, with portico and columns of white marble. Within is a spacious apartment, comfortably furnished, and adorned by two beautiful pictures. One represents Psyche discovering by the light of her lamp Cupid asleep on his couch; the other represents Chloe when the fugitive grasshopper has taken refuge in her bosom, where, believing itself secure, it begins to chirp in its pleasant hiding-place, from which Daphnis is trying, meanwhile, to take it forth.

A very good copy, in Carrara marble, of the Venus de Medici occupies the most prominent place in the apartment, and, as it were, presides over it. On the pedestal are engraved, in letters of gold, this thought of Lucretius:

> "Without thee, darkness reigns instead of light,
> And nothing lovely is, and nothing ever bright."